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DON ORSINO.¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD.

CHAPTER I.

DON ORSINO SARACINESCA is of the younger age and lives in the younger Rome, with his father and mother, under the roof of the vast old palace which has sheltered so many hundreds of Saracinescas in peace and war, but which has rarely in the course of the centuries been the home of three generations at once during one-and-twenty years.

The lover of romance may lie in the sun, caring not for the time of day and content to watch the butterflies that cross his blue sky on the way from one flower to another. But the historian is an entomologist who must be stirring. He must catch the moths, which are his facts, in the net which is his memory, and he must fasten them upon his paper with sharp pins, which are dates.

By far the greater number of old Prince Saracinesca's contemporaries are dead, and more or less justly forgotten. Old Valdarno died long ago in his bed, surrounded by sons and daughters. The famous dandy of other days, the Duke of Astrardente, died at his young wife's feet some three-and-twenty years before this chapter of family history opens. Then the primal Prince Montevarchi came to a violent end at the hands of his librarian, leaving his English princess consolable but unconsoled, leaving also his daughter Flavia married to that other

Giovanni Saracinesca who still bears the name of Marchese di San Giacinto; while the younger girl, the fair, brown-eyed Faustina, loved a poor Frenchman, half soldier and all artist. The weak, good-natured Ascanio Bellegra reigns in his father's stead, the timidly extravagant master of all that wealth which the miser's lean and crooked fingers had consigned to a safe keeping. Frangipani too, whose son was to have married Faustina, is gone these many years, and others of the older and graver sort have learned the great secret from the lips of death.

But there have been other and greater deaths, beside which the mortality of a whole society of noblemen sinks into insignificance. An empire is dead and another has arisen in the din of a vast war, begotten in bloodshed, brought forth in strife, baptised with fire. The France we knew is gone, and the French Republic writes *Liberty, Fraternity, Equality*, in great red letters above the gate of its habitation, which within is yet hung with mourning. Out of the nest of kings and princes and princelings, and of all manner of rulers great and small, rises the solitary eagle of the new German Empire and hangs on black wings between sky and earth, not striking again, but always ready, a vision of armed peace, a terror, a problem—perhaps a warning.

Old Rome is dead, too, never to be old Rome again. The last breath has

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been breathed, the aged eyes are closed for ever, corruption has done its work, and the grand skeleton lies bleaching upon seven hills, half covered with the piecemeal stucco of a modern architectural body. The result is satisfactory to those who have brought it about, if not to the rest of the world. The sepulchre of old Rome is the new capital of united Italy.

The three chief actors are dead also—the man of heart, the man of action, and the man of wit, the good, the brave, and the cunning, the Pope, the King, and the Cardinal—Pius IX., Victor Emmanuel II., Giacomo Antonelli. Rome saw them all dead.

In a poor chamber of the Vatican, upon a simple bed, beside which burned two waxen torches in the cold morning light, lay the body of the man whom none had loved and many had feared, clothed in the violet robe of the cardinal deacon. The keen face was drawn up on one side with a strange look of mingled pity and contempt. The delicate, thin hands were clasped together on the breast. The chilly light fell upon the dead features, the silken robe and the stone floor. A single servant in a shabby livery stood in a corner, smiling foolishly, while the tears stood in his eyes and wet his unshaven cheeks. Perhaps he cared, as servants will when no one else cares. The door opened almost directly upon a staircase and the noise of the feet of those passing up and down upon the stone steps disturbed the silence in the chamber of death. At night the poor body was thrust unhonoured into a common coach and driven out to its resting-place.

In a vast hall, upon an enormous catafalque, full thirty feet above the floor, lay all that was left of the honest king. Thousands of wax candles cast their light up to the dark, shapeless face, and upon the military accoutrements of the uniform in which the huge body was clothed. A great crowd pressed to the railing to gaze their fill and go away. Behind the barrier tall troopers in cuirasses mounted guard

and moved carelessly about. It was all tawdry, but tawdry on a magnificent scale—all unlike the man in whose honour it was done. For he had been simple and brave. When he was at last borne to his tomb in the Pantheon, a file of imperial and royal princes marched shoulder to shoulder down the street before him, and the black charger he had loved was led after him.

In a dim chapel of St. Peter's lay the Pope, robed in white, the jewelled tiara upon his head, his white face calm and peaceful. Six torches burned beside him; six nobles of the guard stood like statues with drawn swords, three on his right hand and three on his left. That was all. The crowd passed in single file before the great closed gates of the Julian Chapel. At night he was borne reverently by loving hands to the deep crypt below. But at another time, at night also, the dead man was taken up and driven towards the gate to be buried without the walls. Then a great crowd assembled in the darkness and fell upon the little band and stoned the coffin of him who never harmed any man, and screamed out curses and blasphemies till all the city was astir with riot. That was the last funeral hymn.

Old Rome is gone. The narrow streets are broad thoroughfares, the Jews' quarter is a flat and dusty building lot, the fountain of Ponte Sisto is swept away, one by one the mighty pines of Villa Ludovisi have fallen under axe and saw, and a cheap, thinly-inhabited quarter is built upon the site of the enchanted garden. The network of by-ways from the Jesuits' church to the Sant' Angelo bridge is ploughed up and opened by the huge Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Buildings which strangers used to search for in the shade, guide-book and map in hand, are suddenly brought into the blaze of light that fills broad streets and sweeps across great squares. The vast Cancelleria stands out nobly to the sun, the curved front of the Massimo palace

exposes its black colonnade to sight upon the greatest thoroughfare of the new city, the ancient Arco de' Cenci exhibits its squalor in unshadowed sunshine, the Portico of Octavia once more looks upon the river.

He who was born and bred in the Rome of twenty years ago comes back after long absence to wander as a stranger in streets he never knew, among houses unfamiliar to him, amidst a population whose speech sounds strange in his ears. He roams the city from the Lateran to the Tiber, from the Tiber to the Vatican, finding himself now and then before some building once familiar in another aspect, losing himself perpetually in unprofitable wastes made more monotonous than the sandy desert by the modern builder's art. Where once he lingered in old days to glance at the river, or to dream of days yet older and long gone, scarce conscious of the beggar at his elbow, and hardly seeing the half-dozen workmen who laboured at their trades almost in the middle of the public way—where all was once aged and silent and melancholy and full of the elder memories—there, at that very corner, he is hustled and jostled by an eager crowd, thrust to the wall by huge, grinding, creaking carts, threatened with the modern death by the wheel of the modern omnibus, deafened by the yells of the modern news-vendors, robbed, very likely, by the light fingers of the modern inhabitant.

And yet he feels that Rome must be Rome still. He stands aloof and gazes at the sight as upon a play in which Rome herself is the great heroine and actress. He knows the woman and he sees the artist for the first time, not recognising her. She is a dark-eyed, black-haired, thoughtful woman when not upon the stage. How should he know her in the strange disguise, her head decked with Gretchen's fair tresses, her olive cheek daubed with pink and white paint, her stately form clothed in garments that would be gay and girlish but which are only unbecom-

ing? He would gladly go out and wait by the stage-door until the performance is over, to see the real woman pass him in the dim light of the street-lamps as she enters her carriage and becomes herself again. And so, in the reality, he turns his back upon the crowd and strolls away, not caring whither he goes until, by a mere accident, he finds himself upon the height of Sant' Onofrio, or standing before the great fountains of the Acqua Paola, or perhaps upon the drive which leads through the old Villa Corsini along the crest of the Janiculum. Then, indeed, the scene thus changes, the actress is gone and the woman is before him; the capital of modern Italy sinks like a vision into the earth out of which it was called up, and the capital of the world rises once more, unchanged, unchanging and unchangeable, before the wanderer's eyes. The greater monuments of greater times are there still, majestic and unmoved, the larger signs of a larger age stand out clear and sharp; the tomb of Hadrian frowns on the yellow stream, the heavy hemisphere of the Pantheon turns its single opening to the sky, the enormous dome of the world's cathedral looks silently down upon the sepulchre of the world's masters.

Then the sun sets and the wanderer goes down again through the chilly evening air to the city below, to find it less modern than he had thought. He has found what he sought and he knows that the real will outlast the false, that the stone will outlive the stucco, and that the builder of to-day is but a builder of card-houses beside the architects who made Rome.

So his heart softens a little, or at least grows less resentful, for he has realised how small the change really is as compared with the first effect produced. The great house has fallen into new hands and the latest tenant is furnishing the dwelling to his taste. That is all. He will not tear down the walls, for his hands are too feeble to build them again, even if he were not occupied with other matters and

hampered by the disagreeable consciousness of the extravagances he has already committed.

Other things have been accomplished, some of which may perhaps endure, and some of which are good in themselves, while some are indifferent and some distinctly bad. The great experiment of Italian unity is in process of trial and the world is already forming its opinion upon the results. Society, heedless as it necessarily is of contemporary history, could not remain indifferent to the transformation of its accustomed surroundings; and here, before entering upon an account of individual doings, the chronicler may be allowed to say a few words upon a matter little understood by foreigners, even when they have spent several seasons in Rome and have made acquaintance with each other for the purpose of criticising the Romans.

Immediately after the taking of the city, in 1870, three distinct parties declared themselves, to wit, the Clericals or Blacks, the Monarchists or Whites, and the Republicans or Reds. All three had doubtless existed for a considerable time, but the wine of revolution favoured the expression of the truth, and society awoke one morning to find itself divided into camps holding very different opinions.

At first the mass of the greater nobles stood together for the lost temporal power of the Pope, while a great number of the less important families followed two or three great houses in siding with the Royalists. The Republican idea, as was natural, found but few sympathisers in the highest class, and these were, I believe, in all cases young men whose fathers were Blacks or Whites, and most of whom have since thought fit to modify their opinions in one direction or the other. Nevertheless the Red interest was, and still is, tolerably strong and has been destined to play that powerful part in parliamentary life which generally falls to the lot of a compact third party, where a fourth does not yet

exist, or has no political influence, as is the case in Rome.

For there is a fourth body in Rome, which has little political but much social importance. It was not possible that people who had grown up together in the intimacy of a close caste-life, calling each other "thee" and "thou" and forming the hereditary elements of a still feudal organisation, should suddenly break off all acquaintance and be strangers one to another. The brother, a born and convinced clerical, found that his own sister had followed her husband to the court of the new King. The rigid adherent of the old order met his own son in the street, arrayed in the garb of an Italian officer. The two friends who had stood side by side in good and evil case for a score of years saw themselves suddenly divided by the gulf which lies between a Roman cardinal and a Senator of the Italian Kingdom. The breach was sudden and great, but it was bridged for many by the invention of a fourth proportion. The points of contact between White and Black became Grey, and a social power, politically neutral and constitutionally indifferent, arose as a mediator between the Contents and the Malcontents. There were families that had never loved the old order but which distinctly disliked the new, and who opened their doors to the adherents of both. There is a house which has become Grey out of a sort of superstition inspired by the unfortunate circumstances which oddly coincided with each movement of its members to join the new order. There is another, and one of the greatest, in which a very high hereditary dignity in the one party, still exercised by force of circumstances, effectually forbids the expression of a sincere sympathy with the opposed power. Another there is, whose members are cousins of the one sovereign and personal friends of the other.

A further means of amalgamation has been found in the existence of the

double embassies of the great powers—Austria, France and Spain each send an Ambassador to the King of Italy and an Ambassador to the Pope, of like state and importance. Even Protestant Prussia maintains a Minister Plenipotentiary to the Holy See. Russia has her diplomatic agent to the Vatican, and several of the smaller powers keep up two distinct legations. It is naturally neither possible nor intended that these diplomats should never meet on friendly terms, though they are strictly interdicted from issuing official invitations to each other. Their point of contact is another grey square on the chess-board.

The foreigner, too, is generally a neutral individual, for if his political convictions lean towards the wrong side of the Tiber his social tastes incline to Court balls; or if he is an admirer of Italian institutions, his curiosity may yet lead him to seek a presentation at the Vatican, and his inexplicable though recent love of feudal princedom may take him, card-case in hand, to that great stronghold of Vaticanism which lies due west of the Piazza di Venezia and due north of the Capitol.

During the early years which followed the change, the attitude of society in Rome was that of protest and indignation on the one hand, of enthusiasm and rather brutally expressed triumph on the other. The line was very clearly drawn, for the adherence was of the nature of personal loyalty on both sides. Eight years and a half later the personal feeling disappeared with the almost simultaneous death of Pius IX. and Victor Emmanuel II. From that time the great strife degenerated by degrees into a difference of opinion. It may perhaps be said also that both parties became aware of their common enemy, the social democrat, soon after the disappearance of the popular King whose great individual influence was of more value to the cause of a united monarchy than all the political clubs and organisations in Italy put

together. He was a strong man. He only once, I think, yielded to the pressure of a popular excitement, namely, in the matter of seizing Rome when the French troops were withdrawn, thereby violating a ratified Treaty. But his position was a hard one. He regretted the apparent necessity, and to the day of his death he never would sleep under the roof of Pius IX.'s palace on the Quirinal, but had his private apartments in an adjoining building. He was brave and generous. Such faults as he had were no burden to the nation and concerned himself alone. The same praise may be worthily bestowed upon his successor, but the personal influence is no longer the same, any more than that of Leo XIII. can be compared with that of Pius IX., though all the world is aware of the present Pope's intellectual superiority and lofty moral principle.

Let us try to be just. The unification of Italy has been the result of a noble conception. The execution of the scheme has not been without faults, and some of these faults have brought about deplorable, even disastrous, consequences, such as to endanger the stability of the new order. The worst of these attendant errors has been the sudden imposition of a most superficial and vicious culture, under the name of enlightenment and education. The least of the new Government's mistakes has been a squandering of the public money, which, when considered with reference to the country's resources, has perhaps no parallel in the history of nations.

Yet the first idea was large, patriotic, even grand. The men who first steered the ship of the state were honourable, disinterested, devoted—men like Minghetti who will not soon be forgotten—loyal, conservative monarchists, whose thoughts were free from exaggeration, save that they believed almost too blindly in the power of a constitution to build up a kingdom, and credited their fellows almost too readily with a purpose as pure and

blameless as their own. Can more be said for these? I think not. They rest in honourable graves, their doings live in honoured remembrance—would that there had been such another generation to succeed them!

And having said thus much, let us return to the individuals who have played a part in the history of the Saracinesca. They have grown older, some gracefully, some under protest, some most unbecomingly.

In the end of the year 1887 old Leone Saracinesca is still alive, being eighty-two years of age. His massive head has sunk a little between his slightly rounded shoulders, and his white beard is no longer cut short and square, but flows majestically down upon his broad breast. His step is slow, but firm still, and when he looks up suddenly from under his wrinkled lids, the fire is not even yet all gone from his eyes. He is still contradictory by nature, but he has mellowed like rare wine in the long years of prosperity and peace. When the change came in Rome he was in the mountains, at Saracinesca, with his daughter-in-law, Corona, and her children. His son Giovanni, generally known as Prince of Sant' Ilario, was among the volunteers at the last and sat for half a day upon his horse in the Pincio, listening to the bullets that sang over his head, while his men fired stray shots from the parapets of the public garden into the road below. Giovanni is fifty-two years old, but though his hair is grey at the temples and his figure a trifle sturdier and broader than of old, he is little changed. His son Orsino, who will soon be of age, overtops him by a head and shoulders, a dark youth, slender still, but strong and active, the chief person in this portion of my chronicle. Orsino has three brothers of ranging ages of whom the youngest is scarcely twelve years old. Not one girl child has been given to Giovanni and Corona, and they almost wish that one of the sturdy little lads had been a daughter. But old Saracinesca

laughs and shakes his head and says he will not die till his four grandsons are strong enough to bear him to his grave upon their shoulders.

Corona is still beautiful, still dark, still magnificent, though she has reached the age beyond which no woman ever goes until after death. There are few lines in the noble face, and such as are there are not the scars of heart-wounds. Her life, too, has been peaceful and undisturbed by great events these many years. There is, indeed, one perpetual anxiety in her existence, for the old prince is an aged man and she loves him dearly. The tough strength must give way some day and there will be a great mourning in the house of Saracinesca, nor will any mourn the dead more sincerely than Corona. And there is a shade of bitterness in the knowledge that her marvellous beauty is waning. Can she be blamed for that? She has been beautiful so long. What woman who has been first for a quarter of a century can give up her place without a sigh? But much has been given to her to soften the years of transition, and she knows that also, when she looks from her husband to her four boys.

Then, too, it seems more easy to grow old when she catches a glimpse from time to time of Donna Tullia Del Ferice, who wears her years ungracefully, and who was once so near to becoming Giovanni Saracinesca's wife. Donna Tullia is fat and fiery of complexion, uneasily vivacious and unsure of herself. Her disagreeable blue eyes have not softened, nor has the metallic tone of her voice lost its sharpness. Yet she should not be a disappointed woman, for Del Ferice is a power in the land, a member of Parliament, a financier and a successful schemer, whose doors are besieged by parasites and his dinner-table by those who wear fine raiment and dwell in kings' palaces. Del Ferice is the central figure in the great building syndicates which in 1887 are at the height of their power. He juggles

with millions of money, with miles of real estate, with thousands of workmen. He is director of a bank, president of a political club, chairman of half-a-dozen companies, and a deputy in the Chambers. But his face is unnaturally pale, his body is over-corpulent, and he has trouble with his heart. The Del Ferice couple are childless, to their own great satisfaction.

Anastase Gouache, the great painter, is also in Rome. Sixteen years ago he married the love of his life, Faustina Montevarchi, in spite of the strong opposition of her family. But times had changed. A new law existed and the thrice repeated formal request for consent made by Faustina to her mother, freed her from parental authority and brotherly interference. She and her husband passed through some very lean years in the beginning, but fortune has smiled upon them since that. Anastase is very famous. His character has changed little. With the love of the ideal republic in his heart, he shed his blood at Mentana for the great conservative principle; he fired his last shot for the same cause at the Porta Pia on the twentieth of September 1870; a month later he was fighting for France under the gallant Charette—whether for France imperial, regal, or republican he never paused to ask; he was wounded in fighting against the Commune, and decorated for painting the portrait of Gambetta, after which he returned to Rome, cursed politics, and married the woman he loved, which was, on the whole, the wisest course he could have followed. He has two children, both girls, aged now respectively fifteen and thirteen. His virtues are many, but they do not include economy. Though his savings are small and he depends upon his brush, he lives in one wing of an historic palace and gives dinners which are famous. He proposes to reform and become a miser when his daughters are married.

"Misery will be the foundation of my second manner, my angel," he says

to his wife, when he has done something unusually extravagant.

But Faustina laughs softly and winds her arm about his neck as they look together at the last great picture. Anastase has not grown fat. The gods love him and have promised him eternal youth. He can still buckle round his slim waist the military belt of twenty years ago, and there is scarcely one white thread in his black hair.

San Giacinto, the other Saracinesca, who married Faustina's elder sister Flavia, is in process of making a great fortune, greater perhaps than the one so nearly thrust upon him by old Montevarchi's compact with Meschini the librarian and forger. He had scarcely troubled himself to conceal his opinions before the change of government, being by nature a calm, fearless man, and under the new order he unhesitatingly sided with the Italians, to the great satisfaction of Flavia, who foresaw years of dullness for the mourning party of the Blacks. He had already brought to Rome the two boys who remained to him from his first marriage with Serafina Baldi—the little girl who had been born between the other two children had died in infancy—and the lads had been educated at a military college, and in 1887 are both officers in the Italian cavalry, sturdy and somewhat thick-skulled patriots, but gentlemen nevertheless in spite of the peasant blood. They are tall fellows enough but neither of them has inherited the father's colossal stature, and San Giacinto looks with a very little envy on his young kinsman Orsino, who has outgrown his cousins. This second marriage has brought him issue, a boy and a girl, and the fact that he has now four children to provide for has had much to do with his activity in affairs. He was among the first to see that an enormous fortune was to be made in the first rush for land in the city, and he realised all he possessed, and borrowed to the full extent of his credit to pay the first instalments on the land he

bought, risking everything with the calm determination and cool judgment which lay at the root of his strong character. He was immensely successful, but though he had been bold to recklessness at the right moment, he saw the great crash looming in the near future, and when the many were frantic to buy and invest, no matter at what loss, his millions were in part safely deposited in national bonds, and in part as securely invested in solid and profitable buildings of which the rents are little liable to fluctuation. Brought up to know what money means, he is not easily carried away by enthusiastic reports. He knows that when the hour of fortune is at hand no price is too great to pay for ready capital, but he understands that when the great rush for success begins the psychological moment of finance is already passed. When he dies, if such strength as his can yield to death, he will die the richest man in Italy, and he will leave what is rare in Italian finance, a stainless name.

Of one person more I must speak, who has played a part in this family history. The melancholy Spicca still lives his lonely life in the midst of the social world. He affects to be a little old-fashioned in his dress. His tall thin body stoops ominously and his cadaverous face is more grave and ascetic than ever. He is said to have been suffering from a mortal disease these fifteen years, but still he goes everywhere, reads everything, and knows every one. He is between sixty and seventy years old, but no one knows his precise age. The foils he once used so well hang untouched and rusty above his fireplace, but his reputation survives the lost strength of his supple wrist, and there are few in Rome, brave men or harebrained youths, who would willingly anger him even now. He is still the great duellist of his day; the emaciated fingers might still find their old grip upon a sword-hilt, the long, listless arm might perhaps once more shoot out with lightning speed, the dull eye

might once again light up at the clash of steel. Peaceable, charitable when none are at hand to see him give, gravely gentle now in manner, Count Spicca is thought dangerous still. But he is indeed very lonely in his old age, and if the truth be told his fortune seems to have suffered sadly of late years, so that he rarely leaves Rome, even in the hot summer, and it is very long since he spent six weeks in Paris or risked a handful of gold at Monte Carlo. Yet his life is not over, and he has still a part to play, for his own sake and for the sake of another, as shall soon appear more clearly.

CHAPTER II.

ORSINO SARACINESCA's education was almost completed. It had been of the modern kind, for his father had early recognised that it would be a disadvantage to the young man in after life if he did not follow the course of study and pass the examinations required of every Italian subject who wishes to hold office in his own country. Accordingly, though he had not been sent to public schools, Orsino had been regularly entered since his childhood for the public examinations and had passed them all in due order, with great difficulty and indifferent credit. After this preliminary work he had been at an English University for four terms, not with any view to his obtaining a degree after completing the necessary residence, but in order that he might perfect himself in the English language, associate with young men of his own age and social standing, though of different nationality, and acquire that final polish which is so highly valued in the human furniture of society's temples.

Orsino was not more highly gifted as to intelligence than many young men of his age and class. Like many of them he spoke English admirably, French tolerably, and Italian with a somewhat Roman twang. He had learned a little German and was rapidly forgetting it again; Latin and

Greek had been exhibited to him as dead languages, and he felt no more inclination to assist in their resurrection than is felt by most boys in our day. He had been taught geography in the practical, continental manner, by being obliged to draw maps from memory. He had been instructed in history, not by parallels, but as it were by tangents, a method productive of odd results, and he had advanced just far enough in the study of mathematics to be thoroughly confused by the terms "differentiation" and "integration." Besides these subjects, a multitude of moral and natural sciences had been made to pass in a sort of panorama before his intellectual vision, including physics, chemistry, logic, rhetoric, ethics and political economy, with a view to cultivating in him the spirit of the age. The Ministry of Public Instruction having decreed that the name of God shall be forever eliminated from all modern books in use in Italian schools and universities, Orsino's religious instruction had been imparted at home and had at least the advantage of being homogeneous.

It must not be supposed that Orsino's father and mother were satisfied with this sort of education. But it was not easy to foresee what social and political changes might come about before the boy reached mature manhood. Neither Giovanni nor his wife were of the absolutely *intransigent* way of thinking. They saw no imperative reason to prevent their sons from joining at some future time in the public life of their country, though they themselves preferred not to associate with the party at present in power. Moreover Giovanni Saracinesca saw that the abolition of primogeniture had put an end to hereditary idleness, and that although his sons would be rich enough to do nothing if they pleased, yet his grandchildren would probably have to choose between work and genteel poverty, if it pleased the fates to multiply the race. He could indeed leave one-half of his

wealth intact to Orsino, but the law required that the other half should be equally divided among all; and as the same thing would take place in the second generation, unless a reactionary revolution intervened, the property would before long be divided into very small moieties indeed. For Giovanni had no idea of imposing celibacy upon his younger sons, still less of exerting any influence he possessed to make them enter the Church. He was too broad in his views for that. They promised to turn out as good men in a struggle as the majority of those who would be opposed to them in life, and they should fight their own battles unhampered by parental authority or caste prejudice.

Many years earlier Giovanni had expressed his convictions in regard to the change of order then imminent. He had said that he would fight as long as there was anything to fight for, but that if the change came he would make the best of it. He was now keeping his word. He had fought so far as fighting had been possible, and had sincerely wished that his warlike career might have offered more excitement and opportunity for personal distinction than had been afforded him in spending an afternoon on horseback listening to the singing of bullets overhead. His amateur soldiering was over long ago, but he was strong, brave, and intelligent, and if he had been convinced that a second and more radical revolution could accomplish any good result, he would have been capable of devoting himself to its cause with a single-heartedness not usual in these days. But he was not convinced. He therefore lived a quiet life, making the best of the present, improving his lands and doing his best to bring up his sons in such a way as to give them a chance of success when the struggle should come. Orsino was his eldest born and the results of modern education became apparent in him first, as was inevitable.

Orsino was at this time not quite

twenty-one years of age, but the important day was not far distant, and in order to leave a lasting memorial of the attaining of his majority Prince Saracinesca had decreed that Corona should receive a portrait of her eldest son executed by the celebrated Anastase Gouache. To this end the young man spent three mornings in every week in the artist's palatial studio, a place about as different from the latter's first den in the Via San Basilio as the Basilica of Saint Peter is different from a roadside chapel in the Abruzzi. Those who have seen the successful painter of the nineteenth century in his glory will have less difficulty in imagining the scene of Gouache's labours than the writer finds in describing it. The workroom is a hall, the ceiling is a vault thirty feet high, the pavement is of polished marble; the light enters by north windows which would not look small in a good-sized church, the doors would admit a carriage and pair, the tapestries upon the walls would cover the front of a modern house. Everything is on a grand scale, of the best period, of the most genuine description. Three or four originals of great masters, of Titian, of Rubens, of Van Dyck, stand on huge easels in the most favourable lights. Some scores of matchless antique fragments, both of bronze and marble, are placed here and there upon superb carved tables and shelves of the sixteenth century. The only reproduction visible in the place is a very perfect cast of the *Hermes of Olympia*. The carpets are all of Shiraz, Sinna, Gjordez, or old Baku—no common thing of Smyrna, no unclean aniline production of Russo-Asiatic commerce disturbs the universal harmony. In the full light upon the wall hangs a single silk carpet of wonderful tints, famous in the history of Eastern collections, and upon it is set at a slanting angle a single priceless Damascus blade—a sword to possess which an Arab or a Circassian would commit countless crimes. Anastase Gouache is magni-

ficent in all his tastes and in all his ways. His studio and his dwelling are his only estate, his only capital, his only wealth, and he does not take the trouble to conceal the fact. The very idea of a fixed income is as distasteful to him as the possibility of possessing it is distant and visionary. There is always money in abundance, money for Faustina's horses and carriages, money for Gouache's select dinners, money for the expensive fancies of both. The paint-pot is the mine, the brush is the miner's pick, and the vein has never failed, nor the hand trembled in working it. A golden youth, a golden river flowing softly to the red-gold sunset of the end—that is life as it seems to Anastase and Faustina.

On the morning which opens this chronicle, Anastase was standing before his canvas, palette and brushes in hand, considering the nature of the human face in general and of young Orsino's face in particular.

"I have known your father and mother for centuries," observed the painter with a fine disregard of human limitations. "Your father is the brown type of a dark man, and your mother is the olive type of a dark woman. They are no more alike than a Red Indian and an Arab, but you are like both. Are you brown or are you olive, my friend? That is the question. I would like to see you angry, or in love, or losing at play. Those things bring out the real complexion."

Orsino laughed and showed a remarkably solid set of teeth. But he did not find anything to say.

"I would like to know the truth about your complexion," said Anastase, meditatively.

"I have no particular reason for being angry," answered Orsino, "and I am not in love—"

"At your age! Is it possible?"

"Quite. But I will play cards with you if you like," concluded the young man.

"No," returned the other. "It

would be of no use. You would win, and if you happened to win much, I should be in a diabolical scrape. But I wish you would fall in love. You should see how I would handle the green shadows under your eyes."

"It is rather short notice."

"The shorter the better. I used to think that the only real happiness in life lay in getting into trouble, and the only real interest in getting out."

"And have you changed your mind?"

"I? No. My mind has changed me. It is astonishing how a man may love his wife in favourable circumstances."

Anastase laid down his brushes and lit a cigarette. Rubens would have sipped a few drops of Rhenish from a Venetian glass. Teniers would have lit a clay pipe. Dürer would perhaps have swallowed a pint of Nuremberg beer, and Greuse or Mignard would have resorted to their snuff-boxes. We do not know what Michelangelo or Perugino did in the circumstances, but it is tolerably evident that the man of the nineteenth century cannot think without talking and cannot talk without cigarettes. Therefore Anastase began to smoke and Orsino, being young and imitative, followed his example.

"You have been an exceptionally fortunate man," remarked the latter, who was not old enough to be anything but cynical in his views of life.

"Do you think so? Yes—I have been fortunate. But I do not like to think that my happiness has been so very exceptional. The world is a good place, full of happy people. It must be—otherwise purgatory and hell would be useless institutions."

"You do not suppose all people to be good as well as happy then," said Orsino with a laugh.

"Good! What is goodness, my friend? One half of the theologians tell us that we shall be happy if we are good, and the other half assure us that the only way to be good is to abjure earthly happiness. If you will believe me, you will never commit the

supreme error of choosing between the two methods. Take the world as it is and do not ask too many questions of the fates. If you are willing to be happy, happiness will come in its own shape."

Orsino's young face expressed rather contemptuous amusement. At twenty, happiness is a dull word, and satisfaction spells excitement.

"That is the way people talk," he said. "You have got everything by fighting for it, and you advise me to sit still till the fruit drops into my mouth."

"I was obliged to fight. Everything comes to you naturally—fortune, rank—everything, including marriage. Why should you lift a hand?"

"A man cannot possibly be happy who marries before he is thirty years old," answered Orsino with conviction. "How do you expect me to occupy myself during the next ten years?"

"That is true," Gouache replied, somewhat thoughtfully, as though the consideration had not struck him.

"If I were an artist, it would be different."

"Oh, very different. I agree with you." Anastase smiled good-humouredly.

"Because I should have talent—and a talent is an occupation in itself."

"I dare say you would have talent," Gouache answered still laughing.

"No—I did not mean it in that way—I mean that when a man has a talent it makes him think of something besides himself."

"I fancy there is more truth in that remark than either you or I would at first think," said the painter in a meditative tone.

"Of course there is," returned the youthful philosopher, with more enthusiasm than he would have cared to show if he had been talking to a woman. "What is talent but a combination of the desire to do and the power to accomplish? As for genius, it is never selfish when it is at work."

"Is that reflection your own?"

"I think so," answered Orsino mod-

estly. He was secretly pleased that a man of the artist's experience and reputation should be struck by his remark.

"I do not think I agree with you," said Gouache.

Orsino's expression changed a little. He was disappointed, but he said nothing.

"I think that a great genius is often ruthless. Do you remember how Beethoven congratulated a young composer after the first performance of his opera? 'I like your opera—I will write music to it.' That was a fine instance of unselfishness, was it not? I can see the young man's face——" Anastase smiled.

"Beethoven was not at work when he made the remark," observed Orsino, defending himself.

"Nor am I," said Gouache, taking up his brushes again. "If you will resume the pose—so—thoughtful but bold—imagine that you are already an ancestor contemplating posterity from the height of a nobler age—you understand? Try and look as if you were already framed and hanging in the Saracinesca gallery between a Titian and a Giorgione."

Orsino resumed his position and scowled at Anastase with a good will.

"Not quite such a terrible frown, perhaps," suggested the latter. "When you do that, you certainly look like the gentleman who murdered the Colonna in a street brawl—I forget how long ago. You have his portrait. But I fancy the Princess would prefer—yes—that is more natural. You have her eyes. How the world raved about her twenty years ago—and raves still, for that matter."

"She is the most beautiful woman in the world," said Orsino. There was something in the boy's unaffected admiration of his mother which contrasted pleasantly with his youthful affectation of cynicism and indifference. His handsome face lighted up a little, and the painter worked rapidly.

But the expression was not lasting, Orsino was at the age when most

young men take the trouble to cultivate a manner, and the look of somewhat contemptuous gravity which he had lately acquired was already becoming habitual. Since all men in general have adopted the fashion of the moustache, youths who are still waiting for the full crop seem to have difficulty in managing their mouths. Some draw in their lips with that air of unnatural sternness observable in rough weather among passengers on board ship, just before they relinquish the struggle and retire from public life. Others contract their mouths to the shape of a heart, while there are yet others who lose control of the pendant lower lip and are content to look like idiots, while expecting the hairy growth which is to make them look like men. Orsino had chosen the least objectionable idiosyncrasy and had elected to be of a stern countenance. When he forgot himself he was singularly handsome, and Gouache lay in wait for his moments of forgetfulness.

"You are quite right," said the Frenchman. "From the classic point of view your mother was and is the most beautiful dark woman in the world. For myself—well in the first place, you are her son, and secondly I am an artist and not a critic. The painter's tongue is his brush and his words are colours."

"What were you going to say about my mother?" asked Orsino with some curiosity.

"Oh—nothing. Well, if you must hear it, the Princess represents my classical ideal, but not my personal ideal. I have admired some one else more."

"Donna Faustina?" inquired Orsino.

"Ah, well, my friend—she is my wife, you see. That always makes a great difference in the degree of admiration——"

"Generally in the opposite direction," Orsino observed in a tone of elderly unbelief.

Gouache had just put his brush into his mouth and held it between his teeth as a poodle carries a stick,

while he used his thumb on the canvas. The modern painter paints with everything, not excepting his fingers. He glanced at his model and then at his work, and got his effect before he answered.

"You are very hard upon marriage," he said quietly. "Have you tried it?"

"Not yet. I will wait as long as possible, before I do. It is not every one who has your luck."

"There was something more than luck in my marriage. We loved each other, it is true, but there were difficulties—you have no idea what difficulties there were. But Faustina was brave and I caught a little courage from her. Do you know that when the Serristori barracks were blown up she ran out alone to find me merely because she thought I might have been killed? I found her in the ruins, praying for me. It was sublime."

"I have heard that. She was very brave——"

"And I a poor Zouave—and a poorer painter. Are there such women nowadays? Bah! I have not known them. We used to meet at churches and exchange two words while her maid was gone to get her a chair. Oh, the good old time! And then the separations—the taking of Rome, when the old Princess carried all the family off to England and stayed there while we were fighting for poor France—and the coming back and the months of waiting, and the notes dropped from her window at midnight, and the great quarrel with her family when we took advantage of the new law. And then the marriage itself—what a scandal in Rome! But for the Princess, your mother, I do not know what we should have done. She brought Faustina to the church and drove us to the station in her own carriage—in the face of society. They say that Ascanio Bellegra hung about the door of the church while we were being married, but he had not the courage to come in for fear of his mother. We went to Naples and lived on salad and love—and we had very little else for a year

or two. I was not much known, then, except in Rome, and Roman society refused to have its portrait painted by the adventurer who had run away with a daughter of Casa Montevarchi. Perhaps, if we had been rich, we should have hated each other by this time. But we had to live for each other in those days, for every one was against us. I painted, and she kept house—that English blood is always practical in a desert. And it was a desert. The cooking—it would have made a billiard-ball's hair stand on end with astonishment. She made the salad, and then evolved the roast from the inner consciousness. I painted a chafroid on an old plate. It was well done—the transparent quality of the jelly and the delicate ortolans imprisoned within, imploring dissection. Well, must I tell you? We threw it away. It was martyrdom. Saint Anthony's position was enviable compared with ours. Beside us that good man would have seemed but a humbug. Yet we lived through it all. I repeat it. We lived, and we were happy. It is amazing how a man may love his wife."

Anastase had told his story with many pauses, working hard while he spoke, for though he was quite in earnest in all he said, his chief object was to distract the young man's attention, so as to bring out his natural expression. Having exhausted one of the colours he needed, he drew back and contemplated his work. Orsino seemed lost in thought.

"What are you thinking about?" asked the painter.

"Do you think I am too old to become an artist?" inquired the young man.

"You? Who knows? But the times are too old. It is the same thing."

"I do not understand."

"You are in love with the life—not with the profession. But the life is not the same now, nor the art either. Bah! In a few years I shall be out of fashion. I know it. Then we will

go back to first principles. A garret to live in, bread and salad for dinner. Of course—what do you expect? That need not prevent us from living in a palace so long as we can."

Thereupon Anastase Gouache hummed a very lively little song as he squeezed a few colours from the tubes. Orsino's face betrayed his discontentment.

"I was not in earnest," he said. "At least, not as to becoming an artist. I only asked the question to be sure that you would answer it just as everybody answers all questions of the kind—by discouraging my wish to do anything for myself."

"Why should you do anything? You are so rich!"

"What everybody says! Do you know what we rich men, or we men who are to be rich, are expected to be? Farmers. It is not gay."

"It would be my dream—pastoral, you know—Normandy cows, a river with reeds, perpetual Angelus, bread and milk for supper. I adore milk. A nymph here and there—at your age, it is permitted. My dear friend, why not be a farmer?"

Orsino laughed a little, in spite of himself.

"I suppose that is an artist's idea of farming."

"As near the truth as a farmer's idea of art, I daresay," retorted Gouache.

"We see you paint, but you never see us at work. That is the difference—but that is not the question. Whatever I propose, I get the same answer. I imagine you will permit me to dislike farming as a profession?"

"For the sake of argument, only," said Gouache gravely.

"Good. For the sake of argument. We will suppose that I am myself in all respects what I am, excepting that I am never to have any land, and only enough money to buy cigarettes. I say, 'Let me take a profession. Let me be a soldier.' Every one rises up and protests against the idea of a Saracinesca serving in the Italian

army. Why? 'Remember that your father was a volunteer officer under Pope Pius IX.' It is comic. He spent an afternoon on the Pincio for his convictions, and then retired into private life. 'Let me serve in a foreign army—France, Austria, Russia, I do not care.' They are more horrified than ever. 'You have not a spark of patriotism! To serve a foreign power! How dreadful! And as for the Russians, they are all heretics.' 'Perhaps they are. I will try diplomacy.' 'What! Sacrifice your convictions? Become the blind instrument of a scheming, dishonest ministry? It is unworthy of a Saracinesca!' 'I will think no more about it. Let me be a lawyer and enter public life.' 'A lawyer indeed! Will you wrangle in public with notaries' sons, defend murderers and burglars, and take fees like the old men who write letters for the peasants under a green umbrella in the street? It would be almost better to turn musician and give concerts.' 'The Church, perhaps?' I suggest. 'The Church? Are you not the heir, and will you not be the head of the family some day? You must be mad.' 'Then give me a sum of money and let me try my luck with my cousin San Giacinto.' 'Business? If you make money it is a degradation, and with these new laws you cannot afford to lose it. Besides, you will have enough of business when you have to manage your estates.' So all my questions are answered, and I am condemned at twenty to be a farmer for my natural life. I say so. 'A farmer, forsooth! Have you not the world before you? Have you not received the most liberal education? Are you not rich? How can you take such a narrow view! Come out to the Villa and look at those young thoroughbreds, and afterwards we will drop in at the club before dinner. Then there is that reception at the old Principessa Befana's to-night, and the Duchessa della Seccatura is also at home.' That is my life, Monsieur Gouache. There you have the question,

the answer and the result. Admit that it is not gay."

"It is very serious, on the contrary," answered Gouache who had listened to the detached Jeremiad with more curiosity and interest than he often showed. "I see nothing for it, but for you to fall in love without losing a single moment."

Orsino laughed a little harshly.

"I am in the humour, I assure you," he answered.

"Well, then—what are you waiting for?" inquired Gouache, looking at him.

"What for? For an object for my affections, of course. That is rather necessary in the circumstances."

"You may not wait long, if you will consent to stay here another quarter of an hour," said Anastase with a laugh. "A lady is coming, whose portrait I am painting—an interesting woman—tolerably beautiful—rather mysterious—here she is, you can have a good look at her before you make up your mind."

Anastase took the half-finished portrait of Orsino from the easel and put another in its place, considerably further advanced in execution. Orsino lit a cigarette in order to quicken his judgment, and looked at the canvas.

The picture was decidedly striking, and one felt at once that it must be a good likeness. Gouache was evidently proud of it. It represented a woman, who was certainly not yet thirty years of age, in full dress, seated in a high carved chair against a warm dark background. A mantle of some sort of heavy claret-coloured brocade lined with fur, was draped across one of the beautiful shoulders, leaving the other bare, the scant dress of the period scarcely breaking the graceful lines from the throat to the soft white hand, of which the pointed fingers hung carelessly over the carved extremity of the arm of the chair. The lady's hair was auburn, her eyes distinctly yellow. The face was an unusual one and not without attraction,

very pale, with a full red mouth too wide for perfect beauty, but well modelled—almost too well, Gouache thought. The nose was of no distinct type, and was the least significant feature in the face, but the forehead was broad and massive, the chin soft, prominent and round, the brows much arched and divided by a vertical shadow which, in the original, might be the first indication of a tiny wrinkle. Orsino fancied that one eye or the other wandered a very little, but he could not tell which—the slight defect made the glance disquieting and yet attractive. Altogether it was one of those faces which to one man say too little and to another too much.

Orsino affected to gaze upon the portrait with unconcern, but in reality he was oddly fascinated by it, and Gouache did not fail to see the truth.

"You had better go away, my friend," he said, with a smile. "She will be here in a few minutes and you will certainly lose your heart if you see her."

"What is her name?" asked Orsino, paying no attention to the remark.

"Donna Maria Consuelo—something or other—a string of names ending in Aragona. I call her Madame d'Aragona for shortness, and she does not seem to object."

"Married? And Spanish?"

"I suppose so," answered Gouache. "A widow, I believe. She is not Italian and not French, so she must be Spanish."

"The name does not say much. Many people put 'd'Aragona' after their names—some cousins of ours, among others—they are Aranjuez d'Aragona—my father's mother was of that family."

"I think that is the name—Aranjuez. Indeed I am sure of it, for Faustina remarked that she might be related to you."

"It is odd. We have not heard of her being in Rome—and I am not sure who she is. Has she been here long?"

"I have known her a month—since she first came to my studio. She lives in a hotel, and she comes alone, except when I need the dress and then she brings her maid, an odd creature who never speaks and seems to understand no known language."

"It is an interesting face. Do you mind if I stay till she comes? We may really be cousins, you know."

"By all means—you can ask her. The relationship would be with her husband, I suppose."

"True, I had not thought of that; and he is dead, you say?"

Gouache did not answer, for at that moment the lady's footfall was heard upon the marble floor, soft, quick and decided. She paused a moment in the middle of the room when she saw that the artist was not alone. He went forward to meet her and asked leave to present Orsino, with that polite indistinctness which leaves to the persons introduced the task of discovering one another's names.

Orsino looked into the lady's eyes and saw that the slight peculiarity of the glance was real and not due to any error of Gouache's drawing. He recognised each feature in turn in the one look he gave at the face before he bowed, and he saw that the portrait was indeed very good. He was not subject to shyness.

"We should be cousins, madame," he said. "My father's mother was an Aranjuez d'Aragona."

"Indeed?" said the lady with calm indifference, looking critically at the picture of herself.

"I am Orsino Saracinesca," said the young man, watching her with some admiration.

"Indeed?" she repeated, a shade less coldly. "I think I have heard my poor husband say that he was connected with your family. What do you think of my portrait? Every one has tried to paint me and failed, but my friend, Monsieur Gouache, is succeeding. He has reproduced my hideous nose and my dreadful mouth with a masterly exactness. No, my dear

Monsieur Gouache, it is a compliment I pay you. I am in earnest. I do not want a portrait of the Venus of Milo with red hair, nor of the Minerva Medica with yellow eyes, nor of an imaginary Medea in a fur cloak. I want myself, just as I am. That is exactly what you are doing for me. Myself and I have lived so long together that I desire a little memento of the acquaintance."

"You can afford to speak lightly of what is so precious to others," said Gouache gallantly. Madame d'Aranjuez sank into the carved chair Orsino had occupied.

"This dear Gouache—he is charming, is he not?" she said with a little laugh. Orsino looked at her.

"Gouache is right," he thought, with the assurance of his years. "It would be amusing to fall in love with her."

CHAPTER III.

GOUACHE was far more interested in his work than in the opinions which his two visitors might entertain of each other. He looked at the lady fixedly, moved his easel, raised the picture a few inches higher from the ground and looked again. Orsino watched the proceedings from a little distance, debating whether he should go away or remain. Much depended upon Madame d'Aragona's character, he thought, and of this he knew nothing. Some women are attracted by indifference, and to go away would be to show a disinclination to press the acquaintance. Others, he reflected, prefer the assurance of the man who always stays, even without an invitation, rather than lose his chance. On the other hand a sitting in a studio is not exactly like a meeting in a drawing room. The painter has a sort of traditional, exclusive right to his sitter's sole attention. The sitter, too, if a woman, enjoys the privilege of sacrificing one-half of her good looks in a bad light, to favour the other side which is presented to the artist's view, and the third person, if there be one,

has a provoking habit of so placing himself as to receive the least flattering impression. Hence the great unpopularity of the third person—or “the third inconvenience,” as the Romans call him.

Orsino stood still for a few moments, wondering whether either of the two would ask him to sit down. As they did not, he was annoyed with them and determined to stay, if only for five minutes. He took up his position in a deep seat under the high window, and watched Madame d'Aragona's profile. Neither she nor Gouache made any remark. Gouache began to brush over the face of his picture. Orsino felt that the silence was becoming awkward. He began to regret that he had remained, for he discovered from his present position that the lady's nose was indeed her defective feature.

“You do not mind my staying a few minutes?” he said, with a vague interrogation.

“Ask madame, rather,” answered Gouache, brushing away in a lively manner. Madame said nothing, and seemed not to have heard.

“Am I indiscreet?” asked Orsino.

“How? No. Why should you not remain? Only, if you please, sit where I can see you. Thanks. I do not like to feel that some one is looking at me and that I cannot look at him, if I please—and as for me, I am nailed in my position. How can I turn my head? Gouache is very severe.”

“You may have heard, madame, that a beautiful woman is most beautiful in repose,” said Gouache.

Orsino was annoyed, for he had of course wished to make exactly the same remark. But they were talking in French, and the Frenchman had the advantage of speed.

“And how about an ugly woman?” asked Madame d'Aragona.

“Motion is most becoming to her—rapid motion—towards the door,” answered the artist.

Orsino had changed his position and was standing behind Gouache.

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“I wish you would sit down,” said the latter, after a short pause. “I do not like to feel that any one is standing behind me when I am at work. It is a weakness, but I cannot help it. Do you believe in mental suggestion, madame?”

“What is that?” asked Madame d'Aragona vaguely.

“I always imagine that a person standing behind me when I am at work is making me see everything as he sees,” answered Gouache, not attempting to answer the question.

Orsino, driven from pillar to post, had again moved away.

“And do you believe in such absurd superstitions?” inquired Madame d'Aragona with a contemptuous curl of her heavy lips. “Monsieur de Saracinesca, will you not sit down? You make me a little nervous.”

Gouache raised his finely marked eyebrows almost imperceptibly at the odd form of address, which betrayed ignorance either of worldly usage or else of Orsino's individuality. He stepped back from the canvas and moved a chair forward.

“Sit here, Prince,” he said. “Madame can see you, and you will not be behind me.”

Orsino took the proffered seat without any remark. Madame d'Aragona's expression did not change, though she was perfectly well aware that Gouache had intended to correct her manner of addressing the young man. The latter was slightly annoyed. What difference could it make? It was tactless of Gouache, he thought, for the lady might be angry.

“Are you spending the winter in Rome, madame?” he asked. He was conscious that the question lacked originality, but no other presented itself to him.

“The winter?” repeated Madame d'Aragona dreamily. “Who knows? I am here at present, at the mercy of the great painter. That is all I know. Shall I be here next month, next week? I cannot tell. I know no one. I have never been here before.

It is dull. This was my object," she added, after a short pause. "When it is accomplished I will consider other matters. I may be obliged to accompany their Royal Highnesses to Egypt in January. That is next month, is it not?"

It was so very far from clear who the royal highnesses in question might be, that Orsino glanced at Gouache, to see whether he understood. But Gouache was imperturbable.

"January, madame, follows December," he answered. "The fact is confirmed by the observations of many centuries. Even in my own experience it has occurred forty-seven times in succession."

Orsino laughed a little, and as Madame d'Aragona's eyes met his the red lips smiled, without parting.

"He is always laughing at me," she said pleasantly.

Gouache was painting with great alacrity. The smile was becoming to her and he caught it as it passed. It must be allowed that she permitted it to linger, as though she understood his wish, but as she was looking at Orsino, he was pleased.

"If you will permit me to say it, madame," he observed, "I have never seen eyes like yours."

He endeavoured to lose himself in their depths as he spoke. Madame d'Aragona was not in the least annoyed by the remark, nor by the look.

"What is there so very unusual about my eyes?" she inquired. The smile grew a little more faint and thoughtful but did not disappear.

"In the first place, I have never seen eyes of a golden-yellow colour."

"Tigers have yellow eyes," observed Madame d'Aragona.

"My acquaintance with that animal is at second-hand—slight, to say the least."

"You have never shot one?"

"Never, madame. They do not abound in Rome—nor even, I believe, in Albano. My father killed one when he was a young man."

"Prince Saracinesca?"

"Sant' Ilario. My grandfather is still alive."

"How splendid! I adore strong races."

"It is very interesting," observed Gouache, poking the stick of a brush into the eye of his picture. "I have painted three generations of the family, I who speak to you, and I hope to paint the fourth if Don Orsino here can be cured of his cynicism and induced to marry Donna—what is her name?" He turned to the young man.

"She has none—and she is likely to remain nameless," answered Orsino gloomily.

"We will call her Donna Ignota," suggested Madame d'Aragona.

"And build altars to the unknown love," added Gouache.

Madame d'Aragona smiled faintly, but Orsino persisted in looking grave.

"It seems to be an unpleasant subject, Prince."

"Very unpleasant, madame," answered Orsino shortly.

Thereupon Madame d'Aragona looked at Gouache and raised her brows a little as though to ask a question, knowing perfectly well that Orsino was watching her. The young man could not see the painter's eyes, and the latter did not betray by any gesture that he was answering the silent interrogation.

"Then I have eyes like a tiger, you say. You frighten me. How disagreeable—to look like a wild beast!"

"It is a prejudice," returned Orsino. "One hears people say of a woman that she is beautiful as a tigress."

"An idea!" exclaimed Gouache, interrupting. "Shall I change the damask cloak to a tiger's skin? One claw just hanging over the white shoulder—Omphale, you know—in a modern drawing-room—a small cast of the Farnese Hercules upon a bracket, there, on the right. Decidedly, here is an idea. Do you permit, madame?"

"Anything you like—only do not spoil the likeness," answered Madame

d'Aragona, leaning back in her chair, and looking sleepily at Orsino from beneath her heavy, half-closed lids.

"You will spoil the whole picture," said Orsino, rather anxiously.

Gouache laughed.

"What harm if I do? I can restore it in five minutes."

"Five minutes!"

"An hour, if you insist upon accuracy of statement," replied Gouache with a shade of annoyance.

He had an idea and, like most people whom fate occasionally favours with that rare commodity, he did not like to be disturbed in the realisation of it. He was already squeezing out quantities of tawny colours upon his palette.

"I am a passive instrument," said Madame d'Aragona. "He does what he pleases. These men of genius—what would you have? Yesterday a gown from Worth—to-day a tiger's skin—indeed, I tremble for to-morrow."

She laughed a little and turned her head away.

"You need not fear," answered Gouache, daubing in his new idea with an enormous brush. "Fashions change,—woman endures,—beauty is eternal. There is nothing which may not be made becoming to a beautiful woman."

"My dear Gouache, you are insufferable. You are always telling me that I am beautiful. Look at my nose."

"Yes. I am looking at it."

"And my mouth."

"I look,—I see,—I admire. Have you any other personal observation to make? How many claws has a tiger, Don Orsino? Quick! I am painting the thing."

"One less than a woman."

Madame d'Aragona looked at the young man a moment, and broke into a laugh.

"There is a charming speech. I like that better than Gouache's flattery."

"And yet you admit that the portrait is like you," said Gouache.

"Perhaps I flatter you, too."

"Ah! I had not thought of that."

"You should be more modest."

"I lose myself——"

"Where?"

"In your eyes, madame. One, two, three, four—are you sure a tiger has only four claws? Where is the creature's thumb—what do you call it? It looks awkward."

"The dew claw?" asked Orsino.

"It is higher up, behind the paw. You would hardly see it in the skin."

"But a cat has five claws," said Madame d'Aragona. "Is not a tiger a cat? We must have the thing right, you know, if it is to be done at all."

"Has a cat five claws?" asked Anastase, appealing anxiously to Orsino.

"Of course, but you would only see four on the skin."

"I insist upon knowing," said Madame d'Aragona. "This is dreadful! Has no one got a tiger? What sort of studio is this—with no tiger?"

"I am not Sarah Bernhardt, nor the Emperor of Siam," observed Gouache, with a laugh.

But Madame d'Aragona was not satisfied.

"I am sure you could procure me one, Prince," she said, turning to Orsino. "I am sure you could, if you would! I shall cry if I do not have one, and it will be your fault."

"Would you like the animal alive or dead?" inquired Orsino gravely, and he rose from his seat.

"Ah, I knew you could procure the thing!" she exclaimed with grateful enthusiasm. "Alive or dead, Gouache? Quick—decide!"

"As you please, madame. If you decide to have him alive, I will ask permission to exchange a few words with my wife and children, while some one goes for a priest."

"You are sublime to-day. Dead, then, if you please, Prince. Quite dead—but do not say that I was afraid——"

"Afraid? With a Saracinesca and a Gouache to defend your life, madame? You are not serious."

Orsino took his hat.

"I shall be back in a quarter of an hour," he said, as he bowed and went out.

Madame d'Aragona watched his tall young figure till he disappeared.

"He does not lack spirit, your young friend," she observed.

"No member of that family ever did, I think," Gouache answered. "They are a remarkable race."

"And he is the only son?"

"Oh, no! He has three younger brothers."

"Poor fellow! I suppose the fortune is not very large."

"I have no means of knowing," replied Gouache indifferently. "Their palace is historic. Their equipages are magnificent. That is all that foreigners see of Roman families."

"But you know them intimately?"

"Intimately—that is saying too much. I have painted their portraits."

Madame d'Aragona wondered why he was so reticent, for she knew that he had himself married the daughter of a Roman prince, and she concluded that he must know much of the Romans.

"Do you think he will bring the tiger?" she asked presently.

"He is quite capable of bringing a whole menagerie of tigers for you to choose from."

"How interesting. I like men who stop at nothing. It was really unpardonable of you to suggest the idea and then to tell me calmly that you had no model for it."

In the meantime Orsino had descended the stairs and was hailing a passing cab. He debated for a moment what he should do. It chanced that at that time there was actually a collection of wild beasts to be seen in the Prati di Castello, and Orsino supposed that the owner might be induced, for a large consideration, to part with one of his tigers. He even imagined that he might shoot the beast and bring it back in the cab. But, in the first place, he was not provided with an adequate sum of money, nor

did he know exactly how to lay his hand on so large a sum as might be necessary at a moment's notice. He was still under age, and his allowance had not been calculated with a view to his buying menageries. Moreover he considered that even if his pockets had been full of bank notes, the idea was ridiculous, and he was rather ashamed of his youthful impulse. It occurred to him that what was necessary for the picture was not the carcass of the tiger but the skin, and he remembered that such a skin lay on the floor in his father's private room—the spoil of the animal Giovanni Saracinesca had shot in his youth. It had been well cared for and was a fine specimen.

"Palazzo Saracinesca," he said to the cabman.

Now it chanced, as such things will chance in the inscrutable ways of fate, that Sant' Ilario was just then in that very room and busy with his correspondence. Orsino had hoped to carry off what he wanted, without being questioned, in order to save time, but he now found himself obliged to explain his errand.

Sant' Ilario looked up in some surprise as his son entered.

"Well, Orsino! Is anything the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing serious, father. I want to borrow your tiger's skin for Gouache. Will you lend it to me?"

"Of course. But what in the world does Gouache want it for? Is he painting you in skins—the primeval youth of the forest?"

"No—not exactly. The fact is, there is a lady there. Gouache talks of painting her as a modern Omphale, with a tiger's skin and a cast of Hercules in the background——"

"Hercules wore a lion's skin—not a tiger's. He killed the Nemean lion."

"Did he?" inquired Orsino indifferently. "It is all the same—they do not know it, and they want a tiger. When I left they were debating whether they wanted it alive or dead. I thought of buying one at the Prati di Castello, but it seemed cheaper to

borrow the skin of you. May I take it?"

Sant' Ilario laughed. Orsino rolled up the great hide and carried it to the door.

"Who is the lady, my boy?"

"I never saw her before—a certain Donna Maria d'Aranjuez d'Aragona. I fancy she must be a kind of cousin. Do you know anything about her?"

"I never heard of such a person. Is that her own name?"

"No—she seems to be somebody's widow."

"That is definite. What is she like?"

"Passably handsome—yellow eyes, reddish hair, one eye wanders."

"What an awful picture! Do not fall in love with her, Orsino."

"No fear of that—but she is amusing, and she wants the tiger."

"You seem to be in a hurry," observed Sant' Ilario, considerably amused.

"Naturally. They are waiting for me."

"Well, go as fast as you can—never keep a woman waiting. By the way, bring the skin back. I would rather you bought twenty live tigers at the Prati than lose that old thing."

Orsino promised and was soon in his cab on the way to Gouache's studio, having the skin rolled up on his knees, the head hanging out on one side and the tail on the other, to the infinite interest of the people in the street. He was just congratulating himself on having wasted so little time in conversation with his father, when the figure of a tall woman walking towards him on the pavement arrested his attention. His cab must pass close by her, and there was no mistaking his mother at a hundred yards' distance. She saw him too, and made a sign with her parasol for him to stop.

"Good-morning, Orsino," said the sweet deep voice.

"Good-morning, mother," he answered, as he descended hat in hand, and kissed the gloved fingers she extended to him.

He could not help thinking, as he looked at her, that she was infinitely more beautiful even now than Madame d'Aragona. As for Corona, it seemed to her that there was no man on earth to compare with her eldest son, except Giovanni himself, and there all comparison ceased. Their eyes met affectionately and it would have been hard to say which was the more proud of the other, the son of his mother, or the mother of her son. Nevertheless Orsino was in a hurry. Anticipating all questions he told her in as few words as possible the nature of his errand, the object of the tiger's skin, and the name of the lady who was sitting to Gouache.

"It is strange," said Corona. "I have never heard your father speak of her."

"He has never heard of her either. He just told me so."

"I have almost enough curiosity to get into your cab and go with you."

"Do, mother." There was not much enthusiasm in the answer.

Corona looked at him, smiled, and shook her head.

"Foolish boy! Did you think I was in earnest? I should only spoil your amusement in the studio, and the lady would see that I had come to inspect her. Two good reasons—but the first is the better, dear. Go—do not keep them waiting."

"Will you not take my cab? I can get another."

"No. I am in no hurry. Good-bye."

And nodding to him with an affectionate smile, Corona passed on, leaving Orsino free at last to carry the skin to its destination.

When he entered the studio he found Madame d'Aragona absorbed in the contemplation of a piece of old tapestry which hung opposite to her, while Gouache was drawing in a tiny Hercules, high up in the right hand corner of the picture, as he had proposed. The conversation seemed to have languished, and Orsino was immediately conscious that the atmo-

sphere had changed since he had left. He unrolled the skin as he entered, and Madame d'Aragona looked at it critically. She saw that the tawny colours would become her in the portrait and her expression grew more animated.

"It is really very good of you," she said, with a grateful glance.

"I have a disappointment in store for you," answered Orsino. "My father says that Hercules wore a lion's skin. He is quite right, I remember all about it."

"Of course," said Gouache. "How could we make such a mistake!"

He dropped the bit of chalk he held and looked at Madame d'Aragona.

"What difference does it make?" asked the latter. "A lion—a tiger! I am sure they are very much alike."

"After all, it is a tiresome idea," said the painter. "You will be much better in the damask cloak. Besides, with the lion's skin you should have the club—imagine a club in your hands! And Hercules should be spinning at your feet—a man in a black coat and a high collar, with a distaff! It is an absurd idea."

"You should not call my ideas absurd and tiresome. It is not civil."

"I thought it had been mine," observed Gouache.

"Not at all. I thought of it—it was quite original."

Gouache laughed a little and looked at Orsino as though asking his opinion.

"Madame is right," said the latter. "She suggested the whole idea—by having yellow eyes."

"You see, Gouache. I told you so. The Prince takes my view. What will you do?"

"Whatever you command——"

"But I do not want to be ridiculous——"

"I do not see——"

"And yet I must have the tiger."

"I am ready."

"Doubtless,—but you must think of another subject, with a tiger in it."

"Nothing easier. Noble Roman damsel—Colosseum—tiger about to spring—rose——"

"Just heaven! What an old story! Besides, I have not the type."

"The Mysteries of Dionysus suggested Gouache. "Thyrus, leopard's skin——"

"A Bacchante! Fie, monsieur—and then the leopard when we only have a tiger."

"Indian princess interviewed by a man-eater—jungle—new moon—tropical vegetation——"

"You can think of nothing but subjects for a dark type," said Madame d'Aragona impatiently.

"The fact is, in countries where the tiger walks abroad, the women are generally brunettes."

"I hate facts. You who are enthusiastic, can you not help us?" She turned to Orsino.

"Am I enthusiastic?"

"Yes, I am sure of it. Think of something."

Orsino was not pleased. He would have preferred to be thought cold and impassive.

"What can I say? The first idea was the best. Get a lion instead of a tiger—nothing is simpler."

"For my part I prefer the damask cloak and the original picture," said Gouache with decision. "All this mythology is too complicated—too Pompeian—how shall I say? Besides there is no distinct allusion. A Hercules on a bracket—anybody may have that. If you were the Marchesa di San Giacinto, for instance—oh, then everyone would laugh."

"Why? What is that?"

"She married my cousin," said Orsino. "He is an enormous giant, and they say that she has tamed him."

"Ah, no! That would not do. Something else, please."

Orsino involuntarily thought of a Sphinx as he looked at the massive brow, the yellow, sleepy eyes, and the heavy mouth. He wondered how the late Aranjuez had lived and what death he had died.

He offered the suggestion.

"It would be appropriate," replied

Madame d'Aragona. "The Sphinx in the Desert. Rome is a desert to me."

"It only depends on you——"
Orsino began.

"Oh, of course! To make acquaintances, to show myself a little everywhere—it is simple enough. But it wearies me—until one is caught up in the machinery, a toothed wheel going round with the rest, one only bores one's self, and I may leave so soon. Decidedly it is not worth the trouble. Is it?"

She turned her eyes to Orsino as though asking his advice. Orsino laughed.

"How can you ask that question!" he exclaimed. "Only let the trouble be ours."

"Ah! I said you were enthusiastic." She shook her head, and rose from her seat. "It is time for me to go. We have done nothing this morning, and it is all your fault, Prince."

"I am distressed—I will not intrude upon your next sitting."

"Oh—so far as that is concerned——" She did not finish the sentence, but took up the neglected tiger's skin from the chair on which it lay.

She threw it over her shoulders, bringing the grinning head over her hair and holding the forepaws in her pointed white fingers. She came very near to Gouache and looked into his eyes her closed lips smiling.

"Admirable!" exclaimed Gouache. "It is impossible to tell where the woman ends and the tiger begins. Let me draw you like that."

"Oh no! Not for anything in the world."

She turned away quickly and dropped the skin from her shoulders.

"You will not stay a little longer? You will not let me try?" Gouache seemed disappointed.

"Impossible," she answered, putting on her hat and beginning to arrange her veil before a mirror.

Orsino watched her as she stood, her arms uplifted, in an attitude which

is almost always graceful, even for an otherwise ungraceful woman. Madame d'Aragona was perhaps a little too short, but she was justly proportioned and appeared to be rather slight, though the tight-fitting sleeves of her frock betrayed a remarkably well-turned arm. Not seeing her face, one might not have singled her out of many as a very striking woman, for she had neither the stateliness of Orsino's mother, nor the enchanting grace which distinguished Gouache's wife. But no one could look into her eyes without feeling that she was very far from being an ordinary woman.

"Quite impossible," she repeated, as she tucked in the ends of her veil and then turned upon the two men. "The next sitting? Whenever you like—to-morrow—the day after—name the time."

"When to-morrow is possible, there is no choice," said Gouache, "unless you will come again to-day."

"To-morrow, then, good-bye." She held out her hand.

"There are sketches on each of my fingers, madame—principally of tigers."

"Good-bye then—consider your hand shaken. Are you going, Prince?"

Orsino had taken his hat and was standing beside her.

"You will allow me to put you into your carriage?"

"I shall walk."

"So much the better. Good-bye, Monsieur Gouache."

"Why say *monsieur*?"

"As you like—you are older than I."

"I? Who has told you that legend? It is only a myth. When you are sixty years old, I shall still be five-and-twenty."

"And I?" inquired Madame d'Aragona, who was still young enough to laugh at age.

"As old as you were yesterday, not a day older."

"Why not say to-day?"

"Because to-day has a to-morrow—yesterday has none."

"You are delicious, my dear Gouache. Good-bye."

Madame d'Aragona went out with Orsino, and they descended the broad staircase together. Orsino was not sure whether he might not be showing too much anxiety to remain in the company of his new acquaintance, and as he realised how unpleasant it would be to sacrifice the walk with her, he endeavoured to excuse to himself his derogation from his self-imposed character of cool superiority and indifference. She was very amusing, he said to himself, and he had nothing in the world to do. He never had anything to do since his education had been completed. Why should he not walk with Madame d'Aragona and talk to her! It would be better than hanging about the club or reading a novel at home. The hounds did not meet on that day, or he would not have been at Gouache's at all. But they were to meet to-morrow, and he would therefore not see Madame d'Aragona.

"Gouache is an old friend of yours, I suppose!" observed the lady.

"He is a friend of my father's. He is almost a Roman. He married a distant connection of mine, Donna Faustina Montevarchi."

"Ah, yes—I have heard. He is a man of immense genius."

"He is a man I envy with all my heart," said Orsino.

"You envy Gouache? I should not have thought——"

"No? Ah, madame, to me a man who has a career, a profession, an interest, is a god."

"I like that," answered Madame d'Aragona. "But it seems to me you have your choice. You have the world before you. Write your name upon it. You do not lack enthusiasm. Is it the inspiration that you need?"

"Perhaps," said Orsino glancing meaningly at her as she looked at him.

"That is not new," thought she, "but he is charming, all the same. They say," she added aloud, "that genius finds inspiration everywhere."

"Alas! I am not a genius. What I ask is an occupation, and permanent interest. The thing is impossible, but I am not resigned."

"Before thirty everything is possible," said Madame d'Aragona. She knew that the mere mention of so mature an age would be flattering to such a boy.

"The objections are insurmountable," replied Orsino.

"What objections? Remember that I do not know Rome, nor the Romans."

"We are petrified in traditions. Spiccia said the other day that there was but one hope for us. The Americans may yet discover Italy, as we once discovered America."

Madame d'Aragona smiled.

"Who is Spiccia?" she inquired, with a lazy glance at her companion's face.

"Spiccia! Surely you have heard of him. He used to be a famous duellist. He is our great wit. My father likes him very much—he is an odd character."

"There will be all the more credit in succeeding, if you have to break through a barrier of tradition and prejudice," said Madame d'Aragona, reverting rather abruptly to the first subject.

"You do not know what that means." Orsino shook his head incredulously. "You have never tried it."

"No. How could a woman be placed in such a position?"

"That is just it. You cannot understand me."

"That does not follow. Women often understand men—men they love or detest—better than men themselves."

"Do you love me, madame?" asked Orsino with a smile.

"I have just made your acquaintance," laughed Madame d'Aragona. "It is a little too soon."

"But then, according to you, if you understand me, you detest me."

"Well? If I do?" She was still laughing.

"Then I ought to disappear, I suppose."

"You do not understand women. Anything is better than indifference. When you see that you are disliked, then refuse to go away. It is the very moment to remain. Do not submit to dislike. Revenge yourself."

"I will try," said Orsino considerably amused.

"Upon me?"

"Since you advise it——"

"Have I said that I detest you?"

"More or less."

"It was only by way of illustration to my argument. I was not serious."

"You have not a serious character, I fancy," said Orsino.

"Do you dare to pass judgment on me after an hour's acquaintance?"

"Since you have judged me! You have said five times that I am enthusiastic."

"That is an exaggeration. Besides, one cannot say a true thing too often."

"How you run on, madame!"

"And you—to tell me to my face

that I am not serious. It is unheard of. Is that the way you talk to your compatriots?"

"It would not be true. But they would contradict me, as you do. They wish to be thought gay."

"Do they? I would like to know them."

"Nothing is easier. Will you allow me the honour of undertaking the matter?"

They had reached the door of Madame d'Aragona's hotel. She stood still and looked curiously at Orsino.

"Certainly not," she answered, rather coldly. "It would be asking too much of you—too much of society, and far too much of me. Thanks. Good-bye."

"May I come and see you?" asked Orsino.

He knew very well that he had gone too far, and his voice was correctly contrite.

"I dare say we shall meet somewhere," she answered, entering the hotel.

(To be continued.)

HUNGRY CHILDREN.

THERE is in the Arena Chapel at Padua a fresco by Giotto which represents Charity as a tall and shapely woman. One of her hands is extended to receive a heart which is being given her from above ; with the other she holds a basket full of good things. She is not blind, like Justice. Though her heart comes direct from Heaven, and her expression is one of reverence, her eyes are her own, and she is wide awake. She stands on a heap of money-bags ; but money is no part of herself. Time has dealt hardly with the picture, and a crack now runs down its middle defacing the figure. But the money-bags are left intact.

The fate of Giotto's fresco is symbolical of the process which has taken place in the popular conception of charity. In its original sense the word denoted an unselfish regard for the good of others, and certainly did not connote material relief ; but in a commercial age we have come to disregard anything which cannot be valued by the standard of money. We are nowadays too apt to confine the use of the term to gifts of pounds, shillings, and pence, or of the food or clothing which they will buy. If we wish to speak of that quality which seeks the highest welfare of others without looking for gratitude to ourselves, or in many cases for immediately visible results in its objects, we have to make use of a many-syllabled and pedantic word. But if philanthropy is a term difficult to pronounce and rarely employed, the difficulty and rarity of the practice of the virtue which it designates are correspondingly great in an age when almsgiving has usurped the name of charity.

Of the various forms of almsgiving which have spread to a great extent in recent years, none is more popular

than the provision of meals to hungry children. The operation of the Elementary Education Acts have brought before the notice of the public the existence of much poverty which was previously latent. The children of the streets have always been sickly, but compulsory attendance at school has brought their pale faces into the light of day. A few years ago an outcry was raised against over-pressure, and it was alleged that the physical and mental powers of the children were overtaxed by the educational curriculum. It was replied that the over-pressure was only relative, and that the tasks were not too severe for healthy and well-nourished children. Then began a new cry ; and in many large towns charitable persons set themselves to provide dinners for the children attending elementary schools. In London many agencies having this object arose. Of these the most important were the Destitute Children's Dinner Society, the Board School Children's Free Dinner Fund, the (so-called) Self-supporting Penny Dinner Council, the Poor Children's Aid Society, the South London Schools Dinner Fund, and the Farm House Fund. The matter was at length taken up by the London School Board, and in November 1889 under their auspices several of the aforesaid agencies were amalgamated into the London Schools Dinner Association. At the end of July 1890 that Society had aided in the supply of over 263,000 dinners. If the movement continues to grow at this rate it is clear that it will become no inconsiderable force for good,—or evil—in the lives of the poor ; and we may well pause and consider what principles are involved in its adoption, what necessity there is for it, and whither it tends.

Before proceeding further, however,

I ought perhaps to remark that attempts have been made in many schools to provide meals on a self-supporting basis. So far as these attempts have been successful they do not fall within the range of the present article; but as a matter of fact they have, I believe, in no case, at any rate in London, quite succeeded in their object; and so far as a charitable element has been admitted into such scheme, it becomes subject to my criticism. For the sake of simplicity however I shall refer directly only to the distribution of dinners gratuitously or at nominal prices.

There are few more pathetic sights than that of a class of children in a very poor school, set to do their tasks when their pale faces and drowsy manner suggest to the mind of the visitor the possibility that some of them have had no breakfast. And when the London School Board tells us that in London there are on any morning some 40,000 children attending elementary schools suffering from want of food, can any humane person pass the matter lightly by? It is clear that half-starved children cannot properly assimilate the instruction given them, and that in dealing with them much of the teacher's labour must be thrown away. If we pay heavy rates to support an enormous educational machine, "why spoil the ship to save a ha'porth of tar?" We are logically bound, so say our educational enthusiasts, to see that the finishing touch required to perfect the machine is not omitted. For once the plain man is inclined to be on the side of the enthusiast. For though, being an Englishman and not a Frenchman, he is not distressed by logical inconsistencies, the alleviation of hunger will always appeal to his sympathy. And can a gift which helps forward the cause of education do any harm either to the recipient or to the community?

This is the obvious side of the question. There is however a school of persons, to which the Charity Organisation Society belongs, who regard it

from another point of view. This school holds that it is unwise in charitable matters to attempt to deal with children apart from the families to which they belong. The family and not the individual is the unit of civilised life. You cannot as a rule benefit the individual unless you benefit the family, and you cannot injure the family without in some degree harming all the members of it. No doubt there is much poverty apparent at our elementary schools, but this must be so long as poverty exists at all. It has decreased, and will continue to decrease with the general improvement in the conditions under which the poor live. Meanwhile any circumstance which retards that improvement will injure the children equally with the parents. The regular provision of charitable meals to the poorest children will in fact operate as a regular allowance to the parents,—an allowance proportioned in quantity to the number of children. Such an allowance will, it is contended, work prejudicially in at least two distinct ways. It will tend to depreciate the wages of unskilled work; and, worse than this, it will offer a direct encouragement to early marriages, will lessen the incentive of parents to self-reliance and providence, and will sap their sense of responsibility in its most important relation, that of family life.¹

Are these objections real, or are they the mere pedantry of deduction? This is the question which we have to answer. It may be conceded at once

¹ It may, by way of a *reductio ad absurdum*, be asked, Would not this contention, if sound, condemn free, or even assisted education—a measure which has been generally approved by public opinion? Extremists would of course say that this is so. There is, however, a great distinction between the free provision of education and of the material necessities of life. In the case of education the need is not instinctively felt, and the demand for it is stimulated by the supply. In the case of material necessities their want serves as the most potent motive for work, and their gratuitous provision must in some degree operate to weaken that motive.

that the experiments, so long as they are carried out only on a small scale, cannot do any great harm ; but the advocates of the system make no secret of their desire to extend it as widely as possible, and we can consider it fairly only by imagining it in operation generally throughout our poorer schools.

We need not go back to the history of the old Poor Law in order to find illustrations of the truth that an allowance in supplementation of wages tends to depress them. There is practically an unlimited quantity of unskilled labour in London, and the wages of the lowest kind of work is determined by the cost of living the cheapest life which the worker regards as more tolerable than that of the workhouse. It is clear that any charitable allowance enables the recipient to sell his labour at a lower price than he could without its help. It is an interesting fact that when the out-relief which was freely given to widows in Whitechapel was withdrawn a few years ago, the wages of charwomen rose in that locality. There is an instance which occurred within my own knowledge, which shows that the operation of the principle may be observed even in the history of a single individual. A lad, whose family had been helped by a charitable society, was placed in a home where he lived rent free, going daily to his work as an errand-boy. He gave satisfaction to his employer and remained in the situation for a considerable period. His wages however were not raised as was expected. After the lapse of much time the employer was approached on the subject ; he gave as the reason for his treatment of the boy, the fact that as the lad had no rent to pay he could afford to live on his original wages. This illustration may appear trivial, but when we reflect that such cases could be multiplied indefinitely, we cannot deny the danger of meddling with such a delicate machine as that by which wages are regulated. It may be noted

that in one district where the promotion of dinners was suggested, the strongest exception was taken to it on that ground by working men themselves.

Let us now turn to the question of the results which the free feeding of children is likely to produce upon character. The practice, if generally adopted in our poor schools would, as we have already remarked, be in effect to give a regular charitable allowance to the poor proportionate in amount to the number of their children. This is in fact what was done in the early decades of this century by the administrators of our old Poor Law. The allowance was then provided by the rates, but so far as the recipients were concerned the principle was the same. What was the result ? No one who has carefully studied the Report of the Poor Law Commission of 1834 (on which our present Poor Law is founded) can doubt that the result of the system was the wholesale demoralisation of the poorest class. Parents came to regard the parish and not themselves as primarily responsible for the care of their children. They married without any prospect of being able to support a family : they went on to look to the parish for work as well as money ; and in this way self-reliance became gradually undermined. At length the evil was so patent that drastic legislation was seen to be necessary in order to meet it, and in the end the whole allowance system was swept away. Nowadays charity is constantly attempting to re-introduce the practices which were discarded by the Poor Law as deleterious to the true interests of the poor. I believe that the school-feeding movement is one such attempt. A bowl of milk offered to a starving cat will rapidly create a crowd of starving cats ; and if free dinners are offered at school to hungry children, the number of hungry children increases instead of diminishing. It is a significant fact that, in some schools where the experiment has been tried, the

managers have found it necessary to bring it to a speedy termination on account of the constant growth of the number of applications for a place on the list of beneficiaries. Too often the application does not stop at the request for food. Clothes also are demanded; and one society which began by providing dinners, is now appealing to the public for help to provide clothes regularly to children at school. In charitable matters a supply creates a demand, and the children of vicious, idle, and improvident parents will in the main always want. Science tells us that the poor must seek their well-being in learning to conform to the natural laws and conditions under which they live. It is a law of nature that children must suffer for their parents' vices and follies. Charity may relieve individuals from the operation of this law, but cannot repeal it; and by obscuring the certainty of its operation, may only intensify the evil which it seeks to remove.

But, it may be asked, does not this line of argument strike at the root of all charity? Are the families of the vicious, the idle, and the improvident to be left to suffer, in order that the community may realise the consequences of vice and folly, and future generations be the wiser and better for the lesson? Our best instincts are all opposed to this doctrine of *laissez faire*. Charity is the most divine of human qualities. The pessimist may well exclaim—

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life.

It is because the Christian and the political economist alike too often answer this question in the affirmative that they are frequently found in opposition to each other. A discussion of religious questions would be out of place in this article, but I may perhaps be allowed to offer a suggestion to those who think that the teaching

of Christ inculcates the indiscriminate relief of immediate distress. Is it an irreverent view of revelation that inspiration has given us no truths which we are capable of discovering for ourselves? And if this view be correct, may we not be content to see in such commands as "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away," merely an inculcation of the charitable spirit which leaves us free to withhold our hand—painful as it may be to us to do so—in cases where experience shows us that our interference would in the long run produce more misery than it removes? Was not Giotto right when he painted Charity as receiving her heart alone direct from Heaven?

I have attempted in the preceding paragraphs to do something towards clearing the mist in which the discussion of charitable questions is generally involved. Let me now return to the consideration of the concrete question of school-dinners in the light of actual experience.

Three questions naturally suggest themselves. (1.) Is the distress which the scheme is intended to meet so great as is represented? (2.) Do the dinners afford any remedy for it? (3.) Is it possible in the administration of the dinners to minimise the evils which would result from their indiscriminate distribution?

Some very useful evidence bearing on these questions has been collected by a special committee of the Charity Organisation Society, which was appointed in December 1889 to consider the best means of dealing with school children alleged to be in want of food. This committee selected five poor schools in different parts of London, in which dinners were being given on the system advocated by the London School Dinners Association. Having obtained the lists of the recipients of the charity they made careful inquiry into the conditions under which they were living. The number of cases examined was necessarily small, but

they were drawn from widely different neighbourhoods, and there is no reason to think that they were exceptional. The results of this investigation are very instructive. Those school-managers, who know the haphazard way in which the large figures said to represent the number of starving children in London were compiled, will not be surprised to hear that of a hundred and one families whose children were receiving free dinners, forty-nine were found not to require material assistance at all. We must not forget that these cases were all selected on account of their apparently exceptional poverty. It is true, however, that the number of half-starved children may have been greatly exaggerated, and yet that there may be many thousands in great want. This brings us to our second question. On this head the answer of our investigators is very definite. In some five or six cases only, they assert, out of the total of a hundred and one, could the temporary supply of meals to the children be regarded as an adequate remedy. Here is a typical example:—

Father, a builder's labourer, earning, when in work, 20s. to 27s. a week. Mother getting 6s. a week by washing. She is not a good manager, and the house is untidy. Both out of work at the time of inquiry, everything pawned, 10s. 6d. due for rent, and family subsisting on landlady's charity. The eldest girl, who had chest delicacy, was receiving *one halfpenny meal a week!*

In another case, in which a boy was receiving dinners, it was ascertained that the family was in distress through the father's illness. The latter, a copperworker, had suffered for three weeks from chest disease; the wife earned a few shillings by odd jobs; there were four children, of whom the eldest earned six shillings a week as errand-boy; the rent was four shillings a week. What in such a case as this was the use of giving a few dinners to one child? As a result of the inquiry which proved that the family were most respectable, the case was taken in hand by the local Charity Organisation Committee.

The man was provided with liberal diet and the best hospital and convalescent treatment; and an excellent mangle with a good connection was obtained for the wife, by which they would earn over twelve shillings a week with a prospect of increase. The cost of this case was some £20, but a family was saved from pauperism.

The case is a good illustration of the better methods of charity. Political economy can raise no objection to charitable interference where its effect is to lift a family into a position of self-dependence. First ascertain that temporary assistance is likely to produce permanent benefit, and then spare no time or trouble in your efforts to make that assistance as thorough as possible. It is this personal element which distinguishes true charity from mere almsgiving. Friendly influence, which, instead of saving a man trouble, encourages him to greater efforts, is not a pauperising force. It is, as a rule, only when a family is in need of material assistance, that a stranger has the opportunity of extending a helping hand, but the cause of distress is generally either ignorance or some defect of character, and no remedy is worthy of the name which does not attack the evil at its root. To cut the stalk merely increases the vigour of its growth in the future. Money is an instrument which charity employs; but the mere gift of money is in most cases not charity at all, but poison.

Let us now consider what answer our cases yield to the third question. The provision of meals to children, it may be argued, is not a panacea, but it is useful so far as it goes. If we entrust the selection of the recipients to the teachers and managers, can we not ensure that those only who are in need are helped? To this we can only reply that these safeguards have proved insufficient in the past. The teachers as a rule have no time, and the managers no inclination to make themselves acquainted with the circumstances of the children in their homes. As I have already stated, inquiry has shown

that these excellent persons may be mistaken as to the need of material assistance in forty-nine out of a hundred and one cases. The cause of the mistake is generally the appearance of the child. Unwholesome surroundings, or some temporary ailment, is as often the cause of paleness as is want of food. In other instances the delicacy is constitutional. In one of the examined cases a child who was thought to be underfed was really sickening for the whooping-cough, and when subsequently visited was rosy and fat. A more striking case was that of a boy who was thought to be underfed because he was naturally delicate, and was recommended for the dinners. The family proved to be in comparatively prosperous circumstances. They were just repaying the last instalment of a loan of £7; and a younger child was at the same time being treated for full-bloodedness consequent upon over-feeding.

Here again is another way in which children find their way on to the dinner-list. Tommy played truant one day and spent his school-fee. Asked next day for an explanation of his absence, he said that his mother had not got the money to give him. She was a widow with three children. At once the fees were remitted for thirteen weeks. The remission was accepted as unmistakable proof of poverty by the dinner-givers and the boy was put on the free list. It was discovered that the mother, in addition to her earnings of ten shillings a week, was receiving from her late husband's employers an allowance of half-a-crown a week for each child.

Dirt has before now been considered sufficient evidence of poverty to entitle a child to free meals. In a case which came to my notice this test was applied with unjust but ludicrous results. While a widow, with two boys, was washing one of them the other escaped into the street. On their appearance at school the latter was promptly awarded a dinner, but the former on account of his "shining morning face"

was decided not to be in need of it. The instances on which I have dwelt may seem trivial, but it is of a series of such trivial events that the lives of the poor are composed, by a series of such trivial influences that their characters are made or marred. The evidence at our disposal is, I think, sufficient to convince an impartial student that the beneficial results of the wholesale provision of charitable meals are extremely small, while we cannot doubt that it tends to initiate both the children and the parents into the practice of *cadging*.

A reply may of course be made by the advocates of the dinner-system. Whatever pauperising tendency the distribution might have in itself, is, so it is argued, more than counterbalanced by the effect of the improvement in education which it brings about. But do facts bear out this assertion? Is it an acquaintance with the three R's, or is it home influence, which forms the character of the child? Follow up the careers of those who have received doles in their youth, and you will find them again and again seeking charitable help in after years. Moreover I greatly doubt whether there are many cases in which the dinners do facilitate education. Many children who appear to be in want of food are not so in fact. Most of those who are really half-starved are the offspring of drunkards, and I have a strong suspicion that parents of this class often allow for any charitable assistance given at school, and deduct a proportionate quantity from the meals supplied at home. In a word, if the number of cases in which the cause of education is promoted by the dinners be small, the demoralization which they produce is widespread.

The alternative course suggested is careful investigation of the circumstances of the whole family, followed by adequate assistance wherever those circumstances can be really improved. This method calls for the expenditure of much personal effort, and often of

no small amount of money. But it is better to deal with a few cases thoroughly than to play with a large number.

If my observations are correct the opposition between the interest of the individual and that of the community, which at first sight seems so often to baffle us in the administration of charity, will in most cases disappear. To put my conclusion shortly, the promiscuous and aimless almsgiving which attracts and manufactures cadgers, does not really benefit the individual recipient, while the careful and considered charity which raises a family to independence does no injury to the community, because it offers no encouragement to indolence and improvidence.

There are however cases in which the greatest difficulty arises. I have pointed out that any interference with parental responsibility is wrong in principle. It tends to weaken family ties and is injurious to society at large. Any attempt therefore to deal with a child apart from its parents is fraught with danger. We have seen that, so long as the child is living at home, such attempts are not, as a rule, likely to attain even their immediate object. Moreover the difficulty of ascertaining the real means of parents, at any rate in large towns, is great. In cases where the parish has to assist a widow with several children, the consensus of enlightened opinion is for this reason entirely in favour of the principle of taking some of the children into the parish schools, instead of making a regular allowance to the mother. But this course again is attended with some very serious disadvantages. It is probable that even unsatisfactory home influences are better for a child than their entire absence. Boys and girls brought up in institutions, however well managed, are apt to have one side of their nature stunted. They may learn to be honest, thrifty, and well-mannered; but the affections and domestic virtues, which even bad

homes and disreputable parents will inspire, are too often undeveloped. Yet even inside an institution the instinct for family relations will strive to find an outlet. Could anything be more pathetic than the following anecdote which comes from the matron of a Poor Law school? Some years ago a baby was found deserted in, let us say, Berwick Street. Her parentage was never traced, and she was in due course sent by the guardians to their district school. For want of another name she was called after the place of her discovery, Ada Berwick. By a strange coincidence another baby was found a few years later in the same street, and taken to the same institution, where she naturally received the same surname. What was not Ada's delight when the two children met! The newcomer bore her name, and must therefore, she maintained, be her sister. She adopted her forthwith, watching over and befriending her in every possible way.

Charitable persons therefore, if they are interested in the real welfare of a family, will strain every nerve to put the parents into a position of self-dependence before they break up the family. There are, however, extreme cases in which children are exposed to such physical hardship or moral danger that their interest clearly demands their complete removal from their surroundings. The parents may or may not be able to maintain them properly. In the former alternative we are once more met with the old difficulty. By taking the care of the family off the parents' hands we shall be offering a premium to the neglect of children by selfish or vicious parents. How is this difficulty to be coped with?

The Industrial Schools Acts are intended to provide a means of dealing with these cases. Any child who is found begging, or left out in the streets at night, or living in an immoral home, may be brought before a magistrate and committed by him to an Industrial Home. An order is made at the same time for a weekly contribution by the

parent towards the cost of the child's maintenance. It is true that as a matter of fact only about five per cent. of this cost is on the average collected from the parents, and magistrates sometimes refuse on this ground to exercise their jurisdiction; but if the parents escape the greater part of the expense they are at any rate put to such trouble in avoiding the payment,—which is collected by the police—that few persons would willingly submit to have such an order made against them. One fact at least is certain, as compared with those large private institutions, like Dr. Barnardo's, in the administration of which parental responsibility is entirely ignored, the certified industrial school system minimises the demoralising tendency of elaborate interference with family duties.

Here then is scope for the exercise of much benevolent energy. But the opportunity is only for those who are in earnest. When a ragged urchin begs of you in the street it is easy to give him a penny, and it is not difficult to send tickets for soup and coal to his parents. You are rewarded for your action, if not by seeing any permanent results, at any rate by copious expressions of gratitude. If on the other hand you give the ragamuffin in charge, his howls collect a crowd who upbraid you for your cruelty, and you get no thanks for the trouble and loss of time occasioned by your attendance at the police court. But you have the satisfaction of knowing that you have been the means of diverting one life from a certainty of wretchedness to a fair possibility of honest labour.

The Industrial Schools Acts, it will be noticed, are applicable only to the grossest cases of ill-treatment or neglect; and in view of the difficulty of working them satisfactorily, opinion will be divided as to the desirability of their further extension. Meanwhile we have in a statute passed two years ago, and known by the awkward title of the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act, 1889, a further legislative attempt to visit the sins of the fathers upon themselves to the advantage of the children. But this Act catches only parents who are guilty of wilful ill-treatment or neglect; and "wilful" misconduct, in a legal sense, is not easy to prove. Neglect resulting from mere selfishness and carelessness cannot be punished. The question whether in any particular case of this nature charity should step in or not is always a difficult one. No general rule can be formulated. The circumstances of each case must be considered on their merits. And in forming our judgment we must not forget that, if we are endowed with the average amount of sympathy, we are strongly biassed in the direction of helping the individual sufferer even though in doing so we may be violating principle. The plain man is apt to think more of immediate results which he himself can witness, than of the remote effect of his actions which may not be felt by the present generation. Let him recognise the truth, in a new sense, of the words—

The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones.

H. CLARENCE BOURNE.

ANDREW MARVELL.

Few poets are of sufficiently tough and impenetrable fibre as to be able with impunity to mix with public affairs. Even though the spring of their inspiration be like the fountain in the garden of grace "drawn from the brain of the purple mountain that stands in the distance yonder," that stream is apt to become sullied at the very source by the envious contact of the world. Poets conscious of their vocation have generally striven sedulously, by sequestering their lives somewhat austere from the current of affairs, to cultivate the tranquillity and freshness on which the purity of their utterance depends. If it be hard to hear sermons and remain a Christian, it is harder to mix much with men and remain an idealist. And if this be true of commerce in its various forms, law, medicine, and even education, it seems to be still more fatally true of politics. Of course the temptation of politics to a philosophical mind is very great. To be at the centre of the machine; to be able perhaps to translate a high thought into a practical measure; to be able to make some closer reconciliation between law and morality, as the vertical sun draws the shadow nearer to the feet,—all this to a generous mind has an attraction almost supreme.

And yet the strain is so great that few survive it. David,—the inspired bandit, as M. Renan with such fatal infelicity calls him—was law-giver, general, king, and poet in one. Sophocles was more than once elected general, and is reported to have kept his colleagues in good humour by the charm of his conversation through a short but disagreeable campaign. Dante was an ardent and uncompromising revolutionary. Goethe was a kind of statesman. Among our own

poets Spenser might perhaps be quoted as a fairly successful compromise; but of poets of the first rank Milton is the only one who deliberately took a considerable and active part in public life.

It is perhaps to Milton's example, and probably to his advice, that we owe the loss of a great English poet. It seems to have been if not at Milton's instigation, at any rate by his direct aid that Andrew Marvell was introduced to public life. The acquaintance began at Rome; but Marvell was introduced into Milton's intimate society, as his assistant secretary, at a most impressionable age. He had written poetry, dealing like *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* mainly with country subjects, and was inclined no doubt to hang on the words of the older poet as on an oracle of light and truth. We can imagine him piecing out his aspirations and day-dreams, while the poet of sterner stuff, yet of all men least insensible to the delights of congenial society, points out to him the more excellent way, bidding him to abjure Amaryllis for a time. He has style, despatches will give it precision; knowledge of men and life will confirm and mature his mind; the true poet must win a stubborn virility if he is to gain the world. The younger and more delicate mind complies; and we lose a great poet, Milton gains an assistant secretary, and the age a somewhat gross satirist.

At a time like this, when with a sense of sadness we can point to more than one indifferent politician who might have been a capable writer, and so very many indifferent writers who could well have been spared to swell the ranks of politicians, we may well take the lesson of Andrew Marvell to heart.

The passion for the country which breathes through the earlier poems, the free air which ruffles the page, the summer languors, the formal garden seen through the casements of the cool house, the close scrutiny of woodland sounds, such as the harsh laughter of the woodpecker, the shrill insistence of the grasshopper's dry note, the luscious content of the drowsy, croaking frogs, the musical sweep of the scythe through the falling swathe; all these are the work of no town-bred scholar like Milton, whose country poems are rather visions seen through the eyes of other poets, or written as a man might transcribe the vague and inaccurate emotions of a landscape drawn by some old uncertain hand and dimmed by smoke and time. Of course Milton's *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro* have far more value even as country poems than hundreds of more literal transcripts. From a literary point of view indeed the juxtapositions of half-a-dozen epithets alone would prove the genius of the writer. But there are no sharp outlines; the scholar pauses in his walk to peer across the watered flat, or raises his eyes from his book to see the quiver of leaves upon the sunlit wall; he notes an effect it may be; but they do not come like treasures lavished from a secret storehouse of memory.

With Andrew Marvell it is different, though we will show by instances that his observation was sometimes at fault. Where or when this passion came to him we cannot tell; whether in the great walled garden at the back of the old school-house at Hull, where his boyish years were spent; at Cambridge, where the oozy streams lapped and green fens crawled almost into the heart of the town, where snipe were shot and wild-duck snared on the site of some of its now populous streets; at Meldreth perhaps, where doubtless some antique kindred lingered at the old manor-house that still bears his patronymic, "the Marvells." Wherever it was,—and such tastes are

rarely formed in later years—the delicate observation of the minute philosopher side by side with the art of intimate expression grew and bloomed.

We see a trace of that leaning nature, the trailing dependence of the uneasy will of which we have already spoken, in a story of his early years. The keen-eyed boy, with his fresh colour and waving brown hair, was thrown on the tumultuous world of Cambridge, it seems, before he was thirteen years of age; a strange medley no doubt,—its rough publicity alone saving it, as with a dash of healthy freshness, from the effeminacy and sentimentalism apt to breed in more sheltered societies. The details of the story vary; but the boy certainly fell into the hands of Jesuits, who finally induced him to abscond to one of their retreats in London, where, over a bookseller's shop, after a long and weary search, his father found him and persuaded him to return. Laborious Dr. Grosart has extracted from the Hull Records a most curious letter relating to this incident, asking for advice from Andrew Marvell's father by a man whose son has been inveigled away in similar circumstances.

Such an escapade belongs to a mind that must have been ardent and daring beyond its fellows; but it also shows a somewhat shifting foundation, an imagination easily dazzled and a pliability of will that cost us, we may believe, a poet. After Cambridge came some years of travel, which afforded material for some of his poems, such as the satire on Holland, of which the cleverness is still apparent, though its elaborate coarseness and pedantic humour make it poor pasture to feed the mind upon.

But the period to which we owe almost all the true gold among his poems, is the two years which he spent at Nunappleton House, 1650-1652, as tutor to the daughter of the great Lord Fairfax, the little Lady Mary Fairfax, then twelve years old. Marvell was at this time twenty-nine; and that exquisite relation which may

exist between a grown man, pure in heart, and a young girl, when disparity of fortune and circumstance forbids all thought of marriage, seems to have been the mainspring of his song. Such a relation is half tenderness which dissembles its passion, and half worship which laughs itself away in easy phrases. The lyric *Young Love*, which indubitably though not confessedly refers to Mary Fairfax, is one of the sweetest poems of pure feeling in the language.

Common beauties stay fifteen;
Such as yours should swifter move,
Whose fair blossoms are too green
Yet for lust, but not for love.

Love as much the snowy lamb,
Or the wanton kid, doth prize
As the lusty bull or ram,
For his morning sacrifice.

Now then love me ; Time may take
Thee before thy time away ;
Of this need we'll virtue make,
And learn love before we may.

It is delightful in this connection to think of the signet-ring with the device of a fawn, which he used in early life and may still be seen on his papers, as a gift of his little pupil, earned doubtless by his poem on the Dying Fawn, which is certainly an episode of Lady Mary's childhood.

In the group of early poems, which are worth all the rest of Marvell's work put together, several strains predominate. In the first place there is a close observation of Nature, even a grotesque transcription, with which we are too often accustomed only to credit later writers. For instance, in *Damon the Mower* he writes :

The grasshopper its pipe gives o'er,
And hamstring'd frogs can dance no more ;
But in the brook the green frog wades,
And grasshoppers seek out the shades.

The second line of this we take to refer to the condition to which frogs are sometimes reduced in a season of extreme drought, when the pools are dry. Marvell must have seen a frog with his thighs drawn and con-

tracted from lack of moisture making his way slowly through the grass in search of a refreshing swamp ; this is certainly minute observation, as the phenomenon is a rare one. Again, such a delicate couplet as,

And through the hazels thick espy
The hatching thristle's shining eye,

is not the work of a scholar who walks a country road, but of a man who will push his way into the copses in early spring, and has watched with delight the timorous eye and the upturned beak of the thrush sunk in her nest. Or again, speaking of the dwindled summer stream running so perilously clear after weeks of drought that the fish are languid :

The stupid fishes hang, as plain
As flies in crystal overtaken.

Or of the hayfield roughly mown, into which the herd has been turned to graze :

And what below the scythe increast,
Is pinched yet nearer by the beast.

The mower's work begun and ended with the dews, in all its charming monotony, seems to have had a peculiar attraction for Marvell ; he recurs to it in more than one poem.

I am the mower Damon, known
Through all the meadows I have mown ;
On me the morn her dew distils
Before her darling daffodils.

And again, of the mowers,

Who seem like Israelites to be
Walking on foot through a green sea,
To them the grassy deeps divide
And crowd a lane to either side.

The aspects of the country on which he dwells with deepest pleasure—and here lies the charm—are not those of Nature in her sublimer or more elated moods, but the gentler and more pastoral elements, that are apt to pass unnoticed at the time by all but the true lovers of the quiet country side, and crowd in upon the mind when surfeited by the wilder glories of

peak and precipice, or where tropical luxuriance side by side with tropical aridity blinds and depresses the sense, with the feeling that made Browning cry from Florence,

Oh, to be in England, now that April's there!

Marvell's lines, *On the Hill and Grove at Billborow*, are an instance of this; there is a certain fantastic craving after antithesis and strangeness, it is true, but the spirit underlies the lines. The poem however must be read in its entirety to gain the exact impression.

Again, for simple felicity, what could be more airily drawn than the following from *The Garden*?

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs doth glide,
There like a bird it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings.

Or this, from the Song to celebrate the marriage of Lord Fauconberg and the Lady Mary Cromwell, of the undisturbed dead of night?

The astrologer's own eyes are set
And even wolves the sheep forget;
Only this shepherd late and soon
Upon this hill outwakes the moon.
Hark! how he sings with sad delight
Through the clear and silent night.

Other poems such as the *Ode on the Drop of Dew* and the *Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn*, too long to quote, are penetrated with the same essence.

At the same time it must be confessed that his imagery is sometimes at fault,—it would be strange if it were not so; he falls now and then, the wonder is how rarely, to a mere literary conceit. Thus the mower Damon sees himself reflected in his scythe; the fawn feeds on roses till its lip "seems to bleed," not with a possibly lurking thorn, but with the hue of its pasturage. With Hobbinol and Tomalin for the names of swain and nymph unreality is apt to grow.

When the garden is compared to a fortress and its scents to a salvo of artillery,—

Well shot, ye firemen! O how sweet
And round your equal fires do meet,—

and,

Then in some flower's beloved hut
Each bee as sentinel is shut,
And sleeps so too,—but if once stirred,
She runs you through, nor asks the word,—

here we are in the region of false tradition and mere literary hearsay. The poem of *Eyes and Tears*, again (so strangely admired by Archbishop Trench), is little more than a string of conceits; and when in *Mourning* we hear that

She courts herself in amorous rain,
Herself both Danae and the shower;

when we are introduced to Indian divers who plunge in the tears and can find no bottom, we think of Macaulay's *Tears of Sensibility*, and Crashaw's fearful lines on the Magdalene's tears,—

Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans.

At the same time Marvell's poems are singularly free as a rule from this strain of affectation. He has none of the morbidity that often passes for refinement. The free air, the wood-paths, the full heat of the summer sun,—this is his scenery; we are not brought into contact with the bones beneath the rose-bush, the splintered sun-dial, and the stagnant pool. His pulses throb with ardent life and have none of the "inexplicable faintness" of a deathlier school. What would not Crashaw have had to say of the *Nuns of Appleton* if he had been so unfortunate as to have lighted on them? But Marvell writes:

Our orient breaths perfumed are
With incense of incessant prayer,
And holy water of our tears
Most strangely our complexion clears,
Not tears of Grief, but such as those
With which calm Pleasure overflows.

And passing by a sweet and natural transition to his little pupil, the young Recluse of Nunappleton,—

I see the angels in a crown
On you the lilies showering down,
And round about you glory breaks
That something more than human speaks.

The poems contain within themselves the germ of the later growth of satire in the shape of caustic touches of humour, as well as a certain austere philosophy that is apt to peer behind the superficial veil of circumstance, yet without dreary introspection. There is a Dialogue between Soul and Body which deals with the duality of human nature which has been the despair of all philosophers and the painful axiom of all religious teachers. Marvell makes the Soul say :

Constrained not only to endure
Diseases, but what's worse, the cure,
And ready oft the port to gain,
Am shipwrecked into health again.

In the same connection in *The Coronet*, an allegory of the Ideal and the Real, he says :

Alas ! I find the serpent old,
Twining in his speckled breast
About the flowers disguised doth fold,
With wreaths of fame and interest.

Much of his philosophy however has not the same vitality, born of personal struggle and discomfiture, but is a mere echo of stoical and pagan views of life and its vanities drawn from Horace and Seneca, who seem to have been favourite authors. Such a sentiment as the following, from *Appleton House*—

But he superfluously spread,
Demands more room alive than dead ;
What need of all this marble crust,
To impart the wanton mole of dust ?—

and from *The Coy Mistress*,—

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, methinks, do there embrace—

are mere pagan commonplaces, however daintily expressed.

But there is a poem, an idyll in the

form of a dialogue between Clorinda and Damon, which seems to contain a distinct philosophical motive. Idylls in the strict sense of the word are not remarkable for having a moral ; or if they have one it may be said that it is generally bad, and is apt to defend the enjoyment of an hour against the conscience of centuries ; but in *Clorinda and Damon*, the woman is the tempter and Damon is obdurate. She invites him to her cave, and describes its pleasures.

- CLO. A fountain's liquid bell
Tinkles within the concave shell.
DA. Might a soul bathe there and be
clean,
Or slake its drought ?
CLO. What is't you mean ?
DA. Clorinda, pastures, caves, and
springs,
These once had been enticing things.
CLO. And what late change ?
DA. The other day
Pan met me.
CLO. What did great Pan say ?
DA. Words that transcend poor shepherd's
skill.

This poem seems to us a distinct attempt to make of the sickly furniture of the idyll a vehicle for the teaching of religious truth. Is it fanciful to read in it a poetical rendering of the doctrine of conversion, the change that may come to a careless and sensuous nature by being suddenly brought face to face with the Divine light ? It might even refer to some religious experience of Marvell's own : Milton's "mighty Pan," typifying the Redeemer, is in all probability the original.

The work then on which Marvell's fame chiefly subsists,—with the exception of one poem which belongs to a different class, and will be discussed later, the Horatian Ode—may be said to belong to the regions of nature and feeling and to have anticipated in a remarkable degree the minute observation of natural phenomena characteristic of a modern school, even to a certain straining after unusual, almost bizarre effects. The writers of that date, indeed, as Green points out, seem

to have become suddenly and unaccountably modern, a fact which we are apt to overlook owing to the frigid reaction of the school of Pope. Whatever the faults of Marvell's poems may be, and they are patent to all, they have a strain of originality. He does not seem to imitate, he does not even follow the lines of other poets; never,—except in a scattered instance or two, where there is a faint echo of Milton,—does he recall or suggest that he has a master. At the same time the poems are so short and slight that any criticism upon them is apt to take the form of a wish that the same hand had written more, and grown old in his art. There is a monotony for instance about their subjects, like the song of a bird recurring again and again to the same phrase; there is an uncertainty, an incompleteness not so much of expression as of arrangement, a tendency to diverge and digress in an unconcerned and vagabond fashion. There are stanzas, even long passages, which a lover of proportion such as Gray (who excised one of the most beautiful stanzas of the Elegy because it made too long a parenthesis) would never have spared. It is the work of a young man trying his wings, and though perhaps not flying quite so directly and professionally to his end, revelling in the new-found powers with a delicious ecstasy which excuses what is vague and prolix; especially when over all is shed that subtle precious quality which makes a sketch from one hand so unutterably more interesting than a finished picture from another,—which will arrest with a few commonplace phrases, lightly touched by certain players, the attention which has wandered throughout a whole sonata. The strength of his style lies in its unexpectedness. You are arrested by what has been well called a “predestined” epithet, not a mere otiose addition, but a word which turns a noun into a picture; the “hook-shouldered” hill “to abrupter greatness thrust,” “the sugar’s uncorrupting oil,” “the vigilant patrol of

stars,” “the squatted thorns,” “the oranges like golden lamps in a green night,” “the garden’s fragrant innocence,”—these are but a few random instances of a tendency that meets you in every poem. Marvell had in fact the qualities of a consummate artist, and only needed to repress his luxuriance and to confine his expansiveness. In his own words,

Height with a certain grace doth bend,
But low things clownishly ascend.

Before we pass on to discuss the satires we may be allowed to say a few words on a class of poems largely represented in Marvell’s works, which may be generally called Panegyric.

Quite alone among these,—indeed, it can be classed with no other poem in the language—stands the Horatian Ode on Cromwell’s return from Ireland. Mr. Lowell said of it that as a testimony to Cromwell’s character it was worth more than all Carlyle’s biographies; he might without exaggeration have said the same of its literary qualities. It has force with grace, originality with charm, in every stanza. Perhaps almost the first quality that would strike a reader of it for the first time is its quaintness; but further study creates no reaction against this in the mind,—the usual sequel to poems which depend on quaintness for effect. But when Mr. Lowell goes on to say that the poem shows the difference between grief that thinks of its object and grief that thinks of its rhymes (referring to Dryden), he is not so happy. The pre-eminent quality of the poem is its art; and its singular charm is the fact that it succeeds, in spite of being artificial, in moving and touching the springs of feeling in an extraordinary degree. It is a unique piece in the collection, the one instance where Marvell’s undoubted genius burned steadily through a whole poem. Here he flies *penna metuenta solvi*. It is in completeness more than in quality that it is superior to all his other work, but in quality too it has that lurking

divinity that cannot be analysed or imitated.

'Tis madness to resist or blame
The force of angry heaven's flame,
And if we would speak true,
Much to the man is due
Who from his private gardens, where
He lived reserved and austere,
(As though his highest plot
To plant the bergamot,)
Could by industrious valour climb
To ruin the great work of Time,
And cast the kingdoms old
Into another mould.

This is the apotheosis of tyrants ; it is the bloom of republicanism just flowering into despotism. But the Ode is no party utterance ; the often quoted lines on the death of Charles, in their grave yet passionate dignity, might have been written by the most ardent of Royalists, and have often done service on their side. But indeed the whole Ode is above party, and looks clearly into the heart and motives of man. It moves from end to end with the solemn beat of its singular metre, its majestic cadences, without self-consciousness or sentiment, austere but not frigid. His other panegyrics are but little known, though the awkward and ugly lines on Milton have passed into anthologies, owing to their magnificent exordium, "When I beheld the poet blind yet old." But no one can pretend that such lines as these are anything but prosaic and ridiculous to the last degree—

Thou hast not missed one thought that
could be fit,
And all that was improper dost omit,
At once delight and horror on us seize,
Thou sing'st with so much gravity and
ease—

though the unfortunate alteration in the meaning of the word *improper* makes them even more ridiculous than they are. The poems on the *First Anniversary of the Government of the Lord Protector*, on the *Death of the Lord Protector*, and on *Richard Cromwell* are melancholy reading though they have some sonorous lines.

And as the angel of our Commonweal
Troubling the waters, yearly mak'st them
heal,

may pass as an epigram. But that a man of penetrating judgment and independence of opinion should descend to a vein of odious genealogical compliment, and speak of the succeeding of

Rainbow to storm, Richard to Oliver,
and add that

A Cromwell in an hour a prince will grow,

by way of apology for the obvious deficiencies of his new Protector, makes us very melancholy indeed. Flattery is of course a slough in which many poets have wallowed ; and a little grovelling was held to be even more commendable in poets in that earlier age ; but we see the pinion beginning to droop, and the bright eye growing sickly and dull. Milton's poisonous advice is already at work.

But we must pass through a more humiliating epoch still. The poet of spicy gardens and sequestered fields seen through the haze of dawn is gone, not like the Scholar Gipsy to the high lonely wood or the deserted lasher, but is stepped down to jostle with the foulest and most venal of mankind. He becomes a satirist, and a satirist of the coarsest kind. His pages are crowded with filthy pictures and revolting images ; the leaves cannot be turned over so quickly but some lewd epithet or vile realism prints itself on the eye. His apologists have said that it is nothing but the overflowing indignation of a noble mind when confronted with the hideous vices of a corrupt court and nation ; that this deep-seated wrath is but an indication of the fervid idealistic nature of the man ; that the generous fire that warmed in the poems, consumed in the satires ; that the true moralist does not condone but condemn. To this we would answer that it is just conceivable a satirist being primarily occupied by an

immense moral indignation, and no doubt that indignation must bear a certain part in all satires; but it is not the attitude of a hopeful or generous soul. The satirist is after all only destructive; he has not learned the lesson that the only cure for old vices is new enthusiasms. Nor if a satirist is betrayed into the grossest and most unnecessary realism can we acquit him entirely of all enjoyment of his subject. It is impossible to treat of vice in the intimate and detailed manner in which Marvell treats of it without having, if no practical acquaintance with your subject, at least a considerable conventional acquaintance with it, and a large literary knowledge of the handling of similar topics; and when Dr. Grosart goes so far as to call Marvell an essentially pure-minded man, or words to that effect, we think he would find a contradiction on almost every page of the satires.

They were undoubtedly popular. Charles II. was greatly amused by them; and their reputation lasted as late as Swift, who spoke of Marvell's genius as preeminently indicated by the fact that though the controversies were forgotten, the satires still held the mind. He started with a natural equipment. That he was humorous his earlier poems show, as when for instance he makes Daphne say to Chloe:

Rather I away will pine,
In a manly stubbornness,
Than be fatted up express,
For the cannibal to dine.

And he shows, too, in his earlier poems, much of the weightier and more dignified art of statement that makes the true satirist's work often read better in quotations than entire; as for instance—

Wilt thou all the glory have,
That war or peace commend?
Half the world shall be thy slave,
The other half thy friend.

But belonging as they do to the period of melancholy decadence of Marvell's art, we are not inclined to

go at any length into the question of the satires. We see genius struggling like Laocoon in the grasp of a power whose virulence he did not measure, and to whom sooner or later the increasing languor must yield. Of course there are notable passages scattered throughout them. In *Last Instructions to a Painter*, the passage beginning, "Paint last the king, and a dead shade of night," where Charles II. sees in a vision the shape of Charles I. and Henry VIII. threatening him with the consequences of unsympathetic despotism and the pursuit of sensual passion, has a tragic horror and dignity of a peculiar kind; and the following specimen from *The Character of Holland* gives on the whole a good specimen of the strength and weakness of the author: Holland, that scarce deserves the name of

land,
As but the off-scouring of the British

sand,
And so much earth as was contributed
By English pilots when they heaved the

lead,
Or what by the Ocean's slow alluvion fell
Of shipwrecked cockle or the mussel-shell,
This undigested vomit of the sea,
Fell to the Dutch by just propriety.

Clever beyond question; every couplet is an undeniable epigram, lucid, well-digested, elaborate; pointed, yet finikin withal,—it is easy to find a string of epithets for it. But to what purpose is this waste? To see this felicity spent on such slight and intemperate work is bitterness itself; such writing has, it must be confessed, every qualification for pleasing except the power to please.

Of the remainder of Marvell's life, there is little more to be said. He was private tutor at Eton to a Master Dutton, a relative of Cromwell's, and wrote a delightful letter about him to the Protector; but the serious business of his later life was Parliament. Of his political consistency we cannot form a high idea. He seems as we should expect him to have been, a Royalist at heart and by sympathy all along; "Tis God-like good," he wrote,

"to save a falling king." Yet he was not ashamed to accept Cromwell as the angel of the Commonwealth, and to write in fulsome praise of Protector Richard; and his bond of union with the extreme Puritans was his intense hatred of prelacy and bishops which is constantly coming up. In *The Loyal Scot* he writes:

The friendly loadstone has not more combined,
Than Bishops cramped the commerce of
mankind.

And in *The Bermudas* he classes the fury of the elements with "Prelates' rage" as the natural enemies of the human race. Such was not the intermeddling in affairs that Milton had recommended. To fiddle, while Rome burnt, upon the almost divine attributes of her successive rulers, this was not the austere storage of song which Milton himself practised.

Andrew Marvell was for many years member for Hull, with his expenses paid by the Corporation. His immense, minute, and elaborate correspondence with his constituents, in which he gave an exact account of the progress of public business, remains to do him credit as a sagacious and conscientious man. But it cannot be certainly imputed to any higher motive than to stand well with his employers. He was provided with the means of livelihood, he was in a position of trust and dignity, and he may well be excused for wishing to retain it. In spite of certain mysterious absences on the Continent, and a long period during which he absented himself from the House in the suite of an embassy to Russia, he preserved their confidence for eighteen years and died at his post. He spoke but little in the House, and his reported speeches add but little to his reputation. One curious incident is related in the Journals. In going to his place he stumbled over Sir Philip Harcourt's foot, and an interchange of blows in a humorous and friendly fashion with hand and hat, took place. At the close of the sitting

the Speaker animadverted on this, Marvell being absent; and a brief debate took place the next day on the subject, Marvell speaking with some warmth of the Speaker's grave interference with what appears to have been nothing more than a piece of childish horse-play. "What passed (said Mr. Marvell) was through great acquaintance and familiarity between us. He never gave him an affront nor intended him any. But the Speaker cast a severe reflection upon him yesterday when he was out of the House, and he hopes that as the Speaker keeps us in order, he will keep himself in order for the future."

For one thing Marvell deserves high credit; in a corrupt age, he kept his hands clean, refusing even when hard pressed for money a gift of £1,000 proffered him by Danby, the Lord-Treasurer, "in his garret," as a kind of retainer on the royal side. In Hartley Coleridge's life of Marvell this is told in a silly, theatrical way, unworthy, and not even characteristic of the man. "Marvell," he says, "looking at the paper (an order on the Treasury which had been slipped into his hand) calls after the Treasurer, 'My lord, I request another moment.' They went up again to the garret; and Jack the servant-boy was called. 'Jack, child, what had I for dinner yesterday?' 'Don't you remember, sir! You had the little shoulder of mutton that you ordered me to bring from a woman in the market.' 'Very right, child. What have I for dinner to-day?' 'Don't you know, sir, that you bid me lay by the blade-bone to broil?' 'Tis so; very right, child; go away.' 'My lord do you hear that? Andrew Marvell's dinner is provided. There's your piece of paper; I want it not. I know the sort of kindness you intended. I live here to serve my constituents: the Ministry may seek men for their purpose,—I am not one.' But with the exception of perhaps the concluding words, there is no reason to think the story authentic, though the fact is unquestioned.

Over Prince Rupert Marvell seems to have had a great influence, so much so that, when the Prince spoke in Parliament, it was commonly said: "He has been with his tutor."

Marvell died suddenly in 1678, not without suspicion of poisoning; but it seems to have been rather due to the treatment he underwent at the hands of an old-fashioned practitioner, who had a prejudice against the use of Peruvian bark which would probably have saved Marvell's life. Upon his death a widow starts into existence, Mary Marvell by name, so unexpectedly and with such a total absence of previous allusion that it has been doubted whether her marriage was not all a fiction. But Dr. Grosart points out that she would never have administered his estate had there been any reason to doubt the validity of her claims; and it was under her auspices that the Poems were first given to the world a few years after his death, in a folio which is now a rare and coveted book.

Of his Prose Works we have no intention of speaking; they may be characterised as prose satires for the most part, or political pamphlets. *The Rehearsal Transposed* and *The Divine in Mode* are peculiarly distasteful examples of a kind of controversy then much in vogue. They are answers to publications, and to the ordinary reader contrive to be elaborate without being artistic, personal without being humorous, and digressive without being entertaining; in short, they combine the characteristics of tedium, dullness, and scurrility to a perfectly phenomenal degree. Of course this is a matter of taste. No one but a clever man could have written them, and no one but an intelligent man could have edited them; but we confess to thinking that a conspiracy of silence would have done more credit both to editor and author. As compared with the poems themselves, the prose works fill many volumes; and any reader of

ordinary perseverance has ample opportunities of convincing himself of Andrew Marvell's powers of expression, his high-spirited beginning, the delicate ideals, the sequestered ambitions of his youth, and their lamentable decline.

It is a perilous investment to aspire to be a poet,—*periculosa plenum opus alea*. If you succeed, to have the world present and to come at your feet, to win the reluctant admiration even of the Philistine; to snuff the incense of adoration on the one hand, and on the other to feel yourself a member of the choir invisible, the sweet and solemn company of poets; to own within yourself the ministry of hope and height. And one step below success, to be laughed at or softly pitied as the dreamer of ineffectual dreams, the strummer of impotent music; to be despised alike by the successful and the unsuccessful; the world if you win,—worse than nothing if you fail.

Mediocribus esse poetis

Non di, non homines, non concessere columnæ.

There is no such thing as respectable mediocrity among poets. Be supreme or contemptible.

And yet we cannot but grieve when we see a poet over whose feet the stream has flowed, turn back from the brink and make the great denial; whether from the secret consciousness of aridity, the drying of the fount of song, or from the imperious temptations of the busy, ordinary world we cannot say. Somehow we have lost our poet. It seems that,

Just for a handful of silver he left us.

Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat.

And the singer of an April mood, who might have bloomed year after year in young and ardent hearts, is buried in the dust of politics, in the valley of dead bones.

HARVEST.

[Respectfully dedicated to our law-makers in India, who, by giving to the soldier-peasants of the Punjab the novel right of alienating their ancestral holdings, are fast throwing the land, and with it the balance of power, into the hands of money-grubbers; thus reducing those who stood by us in our time of trouble to the position of serfs.]

"*Ai!* Daughter of thy grandmother," muttered old Jaimul gently, as one of his yoke wavered, making the handle waver also. The offender was a barren buffalo doomed temporarily to the plough in the hopes of inducing her to look more favourably on the first duty of the female sex, so she started beneath the unaccustomed goad.

"*Ari!* sister, fret not," muttered Jaimul again, turning from obscure abuse to palpable flattery, as being more likely to gain his object; and once more the tilled soil glided between his feet, traced straight by his steady hand. In that vast expanse of bare brown field left by or waiting for the plough, each new furrow seemed a fresh diameter of the earth-circle which lay set in the bare blue horizon—a circle centring always on Jaimul and his plough. A brown dot for the buffalo, a white dot for the ox, a brown and white dot for the old peasant with his lanky brown limbs, and straight white drapery, his brown face, and long white beard. Brown, and white, and blue, with the promise of harvest some time if the blue was kind. That was all Jaimul knew or cared. The empire beyond hanging on the hope of harvest lay far from his simple imaginings; and yet he, the old peasant with his steady hand of patient control, held the reins of government over how many million square miles? That is the province of the Blue Book, and Jaimul's blue book was the sky.

"Bitter blue sky with no fleck of a cloud,
Ho! brother ox! make the plough speed.

[*Ai!* *soorin!* straight I say!]

'Tis the usurers' bellies wax fat and proud
When poor folk are in need."

The rude guttural chant following these silent, earth-deadened footsteps was the only sound breaking the stillness of the wide plain.

"Sky dappled grey like a partridge's breast,
Ho! brother ox! drive the plough deep.

[Steady, my sister, steady!]
The peasants work, but the usurers rest
Till harvest's ripe to reap."

So on and on interminably, the chant and the furrow, the furrow and the chant, both bringing the same refrain of flattery and abuse, the same antithesis. The peasant and the usurer face to face in conflict, and above them both the fateful sky, changeless or changeful as it chooses.

The sun climbed up and up till the blue hardened into brass, and the mere thought of rain seemed lost in the blaze of light. Yet Jaimul as he finally unhitched his plough chanted away in serene confidence—

"Merry drops slanting from west to east,
Ho! brother ox! drive home the wain;
'Tis the usurer's belly that gets the least
When Ram sends poor folk rain."

The home whither he drove the lagging yoke was but a whitish-brown mound on the bare earth-circle, not far removed from an ant-hill to alien eyes; for all that, home to the uttermost. Civilisation, education, culture could produce none better. A home bright with the welcome of women, the laughter of children. Old Kishnu,

mother of them all, wielding a relentless despotism tempered by profound affection over every one save her aged husband. Purtabi, widow of the eldest son, but saved from degradation in this life and damnation in the next by the tall lad whose grasp had already closed on his grandfather's plough-handle. Taradevi, whose soldier-husband was away guarding some scientific or unscientific frontier while she reared up, in the ancestral home, a tribe of sturdy youngsters to follow in his footsteps. Fighting and ploughing, ploughing and fighting; here was life epitomised for these long-limbed, grave-eyed peasants whose tongues never faltered over the shibboleth which showed their claim to courage.¹

The home itself lay bare for the most part to the blue sky; only a few shallow outhouses, half room, half verandah, giving shelter from noon-day heat or winter frosts. The rest was courtyard, serving amply for all the needs of the household. In one corner a pile of golden chaff ready for the milch kine which came in to be fed from the mud mangers ranged against the wall; in another a heap of fuel, and the tall bee-hive-like mud receptacles for grain. On every side stores of something brought into existence by the plough—corn-cobs for husking, millet-stalks for the cattle, cotton awaiting deft fingers and the lacquered spinning-wheels which stand, cocked on end, against the wall. Taradevi sits on the white sheet spread beneath the quern, while her eldest daughter, a girl about ten years of age, lends slight aid to the revolving stones whence the coarse flour falls ready for the mid-day meal. Purtabi, down by the grain-bunkers, rakes more wheat from the funnel-like opening into her flat basket, and as she rises flings a handful to the pigeons sidling on the wall.

A fluttering of white wings, a glint of sunlight on opaline necks, while the children cease playing to watch their favourites tumble and strut over the feast. Even old Kishnu looks up from her preparation of curds without a word of warning against waste; for to be short of grain is beyond her experience. Wherefore was the usurer brought into the world save to supply grain in advance when the blue sky sided with capital against labour for a dry year or two?

"The land is ready," said old Jaimul over his pipe. "'Tis time for the seed—therefore I will seek Anant Ram at sunset and set my seal to the paper."

That was how the transaction presented itself to his accustomed eyes. Seed grain in exchange for yet another seal to be set in the long row which he and his forbears had planted regularly, year by year, in the usurer's field of accounts. As for the harvests of such sowings? Bah! there never were any. A real crop of solid, hard, red wheat was worth them all, and that came sometimes—might come any time if the blue sky was kind. He knew nothing of Statutes of Limitation or judgments of the Chief Court, and his inherited wisdom drew a broad line of demarcation between paper and plain facts.

Anant Ram the usurer, however, was of another school. A comparatively young man, he had brought into his father's ancestral business the modern selfishness which laughs to scorn all considerations save that for Number One. He and his forbears had made much out of Jaimul and his fellows; but was that any reason against making more, if more was to be made?

And more *was* indubitably to be made if Jaimul and his kind were reduced to the level of labourers. That handful of grain, for instance, thrown so recklessly to the pigeons—that might be the usurer's, and so might the plenty which went to build up the long, strong limbs of Taradevi's tribe of young soldiers; idle young scamps who thrashed

¹ Runjeet Singh never enlisted a man who, in counting up to thirty said *pach-is* for five and twenty, but those who said *punj-is* were passed. In other words, the *patois* was made a test of whether the recruit belonged to the Trans-Sutlej tribes or the Cis-Sutlej.

the usurer's boys as diligently during play-time as they were beaten by those clever weedy lads during school-hours.

"Seed grain," he echoed sulkily to the old peasant's calm demand. "Sure last harvest I left thee more wheat than most men in my place would have done; for the account grows, O Jaimul! and the land is mortgaged to the uttermost."

"Mayhap! but it must be sown for all that, else *thou* wilt suffer as much as I. So quit idle words and give the seed as thou hast since time began. What do I know of accounts who can neither read, nor write? 'Tis thy business, not mine."

"'Tis not my business to give ought for nought——"

"For nought," broke in Jaimul with the hoarse chuckle of the peasant availing himself of a time-worn joke. "Thou canst add that nought to thy figures, O *bunniah-ji*!¹ So bring the paper and have done with words. If Ram sends rain—and the omens are auspicious—thou canst take all but food and jewels for the women."

"Report saith thy house is rich enough in them already," suggested the usurer after a pause.

Jaimul's big white eyebrows met over his broad nose. What then, *bunniah-ji*?" he asked haughtily.

Anant Ram made haste to change the subject, whereat Jaimul, smiling softly, told the usurer that maybe more jewels would be needed with next seed grain, since if the auguries were once more propitious, the women purposed bringing home his grandson's bride ere another year had sped. The usurer smiled an evil smile.

"Set thy seal to this also," he said, when the seed grain had been measured; "the rules demand it. A plague, say I, on all these new-fangled papers the *sahib-logue* ask of us. Look you! how I have to pay for the stamps and fees; and then you old ones say we new

ones are extortionate. We must live, O *zemindar-ji*!² even as thou livest."

"Live!" retorted the old man with another chuckle. "Wherefore not! The land is good enough for you and for me. There is no fault in the land!"

"Ay! it is good enough for me, and for you," echoed the usurer slowly. He inverted the pronouns—that was all.

So Jaimul, as he had done ever since he could remember, walked over the bare plain with noiseless feet, and watched the sun flash on the golden grain as it flew from his thin brown fingers. And once again the guttural chant kept time to his silent steps.

"Wheat grains grow to wheat,
And the seed of a tare to tare;
Who knows if man's soul will meet
Man's body to wear.

"Great Ram, grant me life
From the grain of a golden deed;
Sink not my soul in the strife
To wake as a weed."

After that his work in the fields was over. Only at sunrise and sunset his tall, gaunt figure stood out against the circling sky as he wandered through the sprouting wheat waiting for the rain which never came. Not for the first time in his long life of waiting, so he took the wait calmly, soberly.

"It is a bad year," he said, "the next will be better. For the sake of the boy's marriage I would it had been otherwise, but Anant Ram must advance the money. It is his business." Whereat Jodha, the youngest son, better versed than his father in new ways, shook his head doubtfully. "Have a care of Anant, O *baba-ji*,"³ he suggested with diffidence. "Folk say he is sharper than ever his father was."

"'Tis a trick sons have, or think they have, nowadays," retorted old Jaimul wrathfully. "Anant can wait for payment as his fathers waited. God knows the interest is enough to stand a dry season or two."

In truth fifty per cent., and payment

¹ *Bunniah*, a merchant. *Bunniah-ji* signifies, as Shakespeare would have said, Sir Merchant.

² *Zemindar-ji*, Sir Squire.

³ *Baba*, as a term of familiarity, is applied indifferently to young and old.

in kind at the lowest harvest rates, with a free hand in regard to the cooking of accounts should have satisfied even a usurer's soul. But Anant Ram wanted that handful of grain for the pigeons and the youngsters' mess of pottage. He wanted the land in fact, and so the long row of dibbled-in seals dotting the unending scroll of accounts began to sprout and bear fruit. Drought gave them life, while it brought death to many a better seed.

"Not give the money for the boy's wedding!" shrilled old Kishnu six months after in high displeasure. "Is the man mad? When the fields are the best in all the country side."

"True enough, O! wife; but he says the value under these new rules the *sahib-logue* make is gone already. That he must wait another harvest, or have a new seal of me."

"Is that all, O! Jaimul Singh, and thou causing my liver to melt with fear? A seal—what is a seal or two more against the son of thy son's marriage?"

"Tis a new seal," muttered Jaimul uneasily, "and I like not new things. Perhaps 'twere better to wait the harvest."

"Wait the harvest and lose the auspicious time the *purohit*¹ hath found written in the stars? *Ai*, Taradevi! *Ai*! Purtabi! there is to be no marriage, hark you! The boy's strength is to go for nought, and the bride is to languish alone because the father of his father is afraid of a usurer! *Haè, Haè!*"

The women wept the easy tears of their race, mingled with half-real, half-pretended fears lest the Great Ones might resent such disregard of their good omens; the old man sitting silent meanwhile, for there is no tyranny like the tyranny of those we love. Despite all this, his native shrewdness held his tenderness in check. They would get over it, he

told himself, and a good harvest would do wonders—ay! even the wonders which the *purohit* was always finding in the skies. Trust a good fee for that! So he hardened his heart, went back to Anant Ram, and told him that he had decided on postponing the marriage. The usurer's face fell. To be so near the seal which would make it possible for him to foreclose the mortgages, and yet to fail! He had counted on this marriage for years; the blue sky itself had fought for him so far, and now—what if the coming harvest were a bumper?

"But I will seal for the seed grain," said old Jaimul; "I have done that before and I will do it again—we know that bargain of old."

Anant Ram closed his pen-tray with a snap. "There is no seed grain for you, *baba-ji*, this year either," he replied calmly.

Tendays afterwards, Kishnu, Purtabi, and Taradevi were bustling about the courtyard with the untiring energy which fills the Indian woman over the mere thought of a wedding, and Jaimul, out in the fields, was chanting as he scattered the grain into the furrows—

"Wrinkles and seams and sears

On the face of our mother earth;

There are ever sorrow and tears

At the gates of birth."

The mere thought of the land lying fallow had been too much for him; so safe in the usurer's strong-box lay a deed with the old man's seal sitting cheek by jowl beside Anant Ram's brand-new English signature. And Jaimul knew, in a vague, unrestful way, that this harvest differed from other harvests, in that more depended upon it. So he wandered oftener than ever over the brown expanse of field where a flush of green showed that Mother Earth had done her part and was waiting for Heaven to take up the task.

The wedding fire-balloons rose from the courtyard, and drifted away to form constellations in the cloudless sky; the sound of wedding drums

¹ *Purohit*, a spiritual teacher, a sage; answering in some respects to the Red Indian's Medicine-man.

and pipes disturbed the stillness of the starlit nights, and still day by day the green shoots grew lighter and lighter in colour because the rain came not. Then suddenly, like a man's hand, a little cloud! "Merry drops slanting from west to the east;" merrier by far to Jaimul's ears than all the marriage music was that low rumble from the canopy of purple cloud, and the discordant scream of the peacock telling of the storm to come. Then in the evening, when the setting sun could only send a bar of pale primrose light between the solid purple and the solid brown, what joy to pick a dry-shod way along the boundary ridges and see the promise of harvest doubled by the reflection of each tender green spikelet in the flooded fields! The night settled down dark, heavenly dark, with a fine spray of steady rain in the old, weather-beaten face, as it set itself towards home.

The blue sky was on the side of labour this time, and, during the next month or so, Taradevi's young soldiers made mud pies, and crowed more lustily than ever over the *bunniah's* boys.

Then the silvery beard began to show in the wheat, and old Jaimul laughed aloud in the fulness of his heart.

"That is an end of the new seal," he said boastfully, as he smoked his pipe in the village square. "It is a poor man's harvest, and no mistake."

But Anant Ram was silent. The April sun had given some of its sunshine to the yellowing crops before he spoke.

"I can wait no longer for my money, O *baba-ji*!" he said; "the three years are nigh over, and I must defend myself."

"What three years?" asked Jaimul, in perplexity.

"The three years during which I can claim my own according to the *sahib-logue's* rule. You must pay, or I must sue."

"Pay before harvest! What are these fool's words? Of course I will

pay in due time; hath not great Ram sent me rain to wash out the old writing?"

"But what of the new one, *baba-ji*?—the cash lent on permission to foreclose the mortgages?"

"If the harvest failed—if it failed," protested Jaimul, quickly. "And I knew it could not fail. The stars said so, and great Ram would not have it so."

"That is old-world talk!" sneered Anant. "We do not put that sort of thing in the bond. You sealed it, and I must sue."

"What good to sue ere harvest? What money have I? But I will pay good grain when it comes, and the paper can grow as before."

Anant Ram sniggered.

"What good, O *baba-ji*? Why, the land will be mine, and I can take, not what you give me, but what I choose. For the labourer his hire, and the rest for me."

"Thou art mad!" cried Jaimul, but he went back to his fields with a great fear at his heart—a fear which sent him again to the usurer's ere many days were over.

"Here are my house's jewels," he said briefly, "and the mare thou hast coveted these two years. Take them, and write off my debt till harvest."

Anant Ram smiled again.

"It shall be part payment of the acknowledged claim," he said; "let the courts decide on the rest."

"After the harvest?"

"Ay, after the harvest; in consideration of the jewels."

Anant Ram kept his word, and the fields were shorn of their crop ere the summons to attend the District Court was brought to the old peasant.

"By the Great Spirit who judges all it is a lie!" That was all he could say as the long, carefully-woven tissue of fraud and cunning blinded even the eyes of a justice biassed in his favour. The records of our Indian law-courts teem with such cases—cases where even equity can do nothing against the evidence of pen and paper. No

need to detail the strands which formed the net. The long array of seals had borne fruit at last, fiftyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold ; a goodly harvest for the usurer.

"Look not so glum, friend," smiled Anant Ram, as they pushed old Jaimul from the court at last, dazed but still vehemently protesting. "Thou and Jodha thy son shall till the land as ever, seeing thou art skilled in such work, but there shall be no idlers ; and the land, mark you, is *mine*, not yours."

A sudden gleam of furious hate sprang to the strong old face, but died away as quickly as it came.

"Thou liest," said Jaimul ; "I will appeal. The land is mine. It hath been mine and my fathers' under the king's pleasure since time began. Kings, ay, and queens, for that matter, are not fools, to give good land to the *bunniah's* belly. Can a *bunniah* plough?"

Yet as he sat all day about the court-house steps awaiting some legal detail or other, doubt even of his own incredulity came over him. He had often heard of similar misfortunes to his fellows, but somehow the possibility of such evil appearing in his own life had never entered his brain. And what would Kishnu say—after all these years, these long years of content?

The moon gathering light as the sun set shone full on the road, as the old man, with downcast head, made his way across the level plain to the mud hovel which had been a true home to him and his for centuries. His empty hands hung at his sides, and the fingers twitched nervously as if seeking something. On either side the bare stubble, stretching away from the track which led deviously to the scarce discernible hamlets here and there. Not a soul in sight, but every now and again a glimmer of light showing where some one was watching the heaps of new threshed grain upon the threshing-floors.

And then a straighter thread of path leading right upon his own fields and the village beyond. What was that ? A man riding before him. The

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blood leapt through the old veins, and the old hands gripped in upon themselves. So he—that liar riding ahead—was to have the land, was he ? Riding the mare too, while he, Jaimul, came behind afoot,—yet for all that gaining steadily with long swinging stride on the figure ahead. A white figure on a white horse like death ; or was the avenger behind beneath the lank folds of drapery which fluttered round the walker ?

The land ! No ! He should never have the land. How could he ? The very idea was absurd. Jaimul, thinking thus, held his head erect and his hands relaxed their grip. He was close on the rider now, and just before him, clear in the moonlight, rose the boundary mark of his fields—a loose pile of sun-baked clods, hardened by many a dry year of famine to the endurance of stone. Beside it, the shallow whence they had been dug, showing a gleam of water still held in the stiff clay. The mare paused, straining at the bridle for a drink, and Jaimul almost at her heels paused also, involuntarily, mechanically. For a moment they stood thus, a silent white group in the moonlight, then the figure on the horse slipped to the ground and moved a step forward. Only one step, but that was within the boundary. Then, above the even wheeze of the thirsty beast, rose a low chuckle as the usurer stooped for a handful of soil and let it glide through his fingers.

"It is good ground ! Ay, Ay—none better."

They were his last words. In fierce passion of love, hate, jealousy, and protection old Jaimul closed on his enemy, and found something to grip with his steady old hands. Not the plough-handle this time, but a throat, a warm living throat where you could feel the blood swelling in the veins beneath your fingers. Down almost without a struggle, the old face above the young one, the lank knee upon the broad body. And now quick ! for something to slay *withal*, ere age tired

in its contest with youth and strength. There, ready since all time, stood the landmark, and one clod after another snatched from it fell on the upturned face with a dull thud. Fell again and again, crashed and broke to crumbling soil. Good soil! Ay! none better! Wheat might grow in it and give increase fortyfold, sixtyfold, ay, a hundredfold. Again, again, and yet again, with dull insistence till there was a shuddering sigh and then silence. Jaimul stood up quivering from the task and looked over his fields. They were at least free from that *thing* at his feet; for what part in this world's harvest could belong to the ghastly figure with its face beaten to a jelly, which lay staring up into the overarching sky? So far, at any rate, the business was settled for ever, and in so short a time that the mare had scarcely slaked her thirst and still stood with head down, the water dripping from her muzzle. The *thing* would never ride her again either. Half-involuntarily he stepped to her side and loosened the girth.

"*Ari!* sister," he said aloud, "thou hast had enough. Go home."

The docile beast obeyed his well-known voice, and as her echoing amble died away Jaimul looked at his blood-stained hands and then at the formless face at his feet. There was no home for him, and yet he was not sorry, or ashamed, or frightened; only dazed at the hurry of his own act. Such things had to be done sometimes when folk were unjust. They would hang him for it, of course, but he had at least made his protest, and done his deed as good men and true should do when the time came. So he left the horror staring up into the sky and made his way to the threshing-floor, which lay right in the middle of his fields. How white the great heaps of yellow corn showed in the moonlight, and how large! His heart leapt with a fierce joy at the sight. Here was harvest indeed! Some one lay asleep upon the biggest pile, and his stern old face relaxed into a smile as, stoop-

ing over the careless sentinel, he found it was his grandson. The boy would watch better as he grew older, thought Jaimul as he drew his cotton plaid gently over the smooth round limbs outlined among the yielding grain, lest the envious moon might covet their promise of beauty.

"Son of my son! Son of my son!" he murmured over and over again as he sat down to watch out the night beside his corn for the last time. Yes, for the last time! At dawn the deed would be discovered; they would take him, and he would not deny his own handiwork. Why should he? The midnight air of May was hot as a furnace, and as he wiped the sweat from his forehead it mingled with the dust and blood upon his hands. He looked at them with a curious smile before he lay back among the corn. Many a night he had watched the slow stars wheeling to meet the morn, but never by a fairer harvest than this.

The boy at his side stirred in his sleep. "Son of my son! Son of my son!" came the low murmur again. Ay! and his son after him again, if the women said true. It had always been so. Father and son, father and son, father—and son—for ever,—and ever,—and ever.

So, lulled by the familiar thought, the old man fell asleep beside the boy, and the whole bare expanse of earth and sky seemed empty save for them. No! there was something else surely. Down on the hard white threshing-floor—was that a branch or a fragment of rope? Neither, for it moved deviously hither and thither, raising a hooded head now and again as if seeking something; for all its twists and turns bearing steadily towards the sleepers; past the boy, making him shift uneasily as the cold coil touched his arms: swifter now as it drew nearer the scent till it found what it sought upon the old man's hands.¹

¹ Snakes are said to be attracted by the scent of blood, as they are undoubtedly by that of milk.

"*Ari*, sister ! straight, I say, straight !" murmured the old ploughman in his sleep as his grip strengthened over something that wavered in his steady clasp. Was that the prick of the goad ? Sure if it bit so deep upon the sister's hide no wonder she started. He must keep his grip for men's throats when sleep was over—when this great sleep was over.

The slow stars wheeled, and when the morn brought Justice, it found old Jaimul dead among his corn and left him there. But the women washed the stains of blood and sweat mingled with soil and seed grains from his hands, before the wreath of smoke from his funeral pyre rose up to

make a white cloud no bigger than a man's hand upon the bitter blue sky ; a cloud that brought gladness to no heart.

The usurer's boys, it is true, forced the utmost from the land, and sent all save bare sustenance across the seas ; but the home guided by Jaimul's unswerving hand was gone, and Taradevi's tribe of budding soldiers drifted away to learn the lawlessness born of change. Perhaps the yellow English gold which came into the country in return for the red Indian wheat more than paid for these trivial losses. Perhaps it did not. That is a question which the next Mutiny must settle.

IN THE LAND OF CHAMPAGNE.

A FEW years ago M. Gastor Chandon, whose name cannot but awaken pleasurable memories in many minds, initiated a literary competition to do honour to the wine of which his firm have been such distinguished producers. There were more than eleven hundred candidates throughout the Republic. The judges were called upon to read sonnets, satires, elegies, ballads, and laudatory pieces of prose by the score, and also a tragedy in five acts,—all assuming to be in praise of champagne, “the most aristocratic wine in the universe.” The competitors themselves were as varied in their stations of life as the fruits of their literary efforts. One cannot marvel that there were many wine-merchants among them. But ladies of high rank, parish priests, and schoolboys, also tried their genius upon so alluring a theme. They could hardly have had one more fit to inspire them, especially if they remembered, like good patriots, Voltaire’s sparkling allusion to it:

De ce vin frais l’écume pétillante
De nos Français est l’image brillante.

This parallel has much truth in it. We are not concerned to say if it be wholly a complimentary one. But the average Frenchman is well content to be thought a lively and amiable gentleman, and it will not, therefore, pain him to be reminded that “body” is not the quality in which champagne most excels.

The other day I found myself in Epernay somewhat late in the evening. It was on the eve of the Autumn Manœuvres, and the place was full of troops. For bedroom accommodation I had to choose between the stables and a little hole of a room which looked down upon the stables, and smelt as sweet as if ten miry steeds had been

washed and stalled in it. The corridors of the hotel resounded with the martial clank of swords, and their owners seemed in the humour to slight civilians as beings quite beneath their notice. I could not, in short, have come into Champagne-land at a worse opportunity. But still later in the evening, when I had dined and drunk some very ordinary red champagne, I congratulated myself that I had arrived at this conjuncture. There were notices upon the walls inviting the good citizens of Epernay to attend a concert offered to them by M. Chandon. And attend it they did by thousands. It was a chilly night of early autumn, with a heavy dew in the air. But in spite of this, old men and women from the vicinity, with quaint puckered faces, were to be seen sitting side by side with the *élite* of the town, while youths and children lay at full length or rolled about the grass in extreme enjoyment of the great champagne-merchant’s æsthetic treat. Among much else the programme included the Russian hymn, a choice morsel from Rossini, the *Marseillaise* and *La Foire d’Epernay*. The people were unmistakably happy. It was clear that the cellars beneath our feet, and their precious contents, are a blessing to this bright red-roofed town on the chalk slopes overlooking the green valley of the Marne.

The next day I walked to Rheims through vineyards with magic names on the stones which divided section from section. It was an enchanting forenoon, with a blue sky and a slumberous breeze from the hills. Men and women were at work among the vines, and their blouses and gowns matched well with the verdure. The hot sun had already licked up the dew, and the soil was in hard nodules. A month later the grapes would be ripe. The

traditional lore of that venerable manual of the vinegrower, *La Maison Rustique*, is still held in regard in Champagne. Dew, damp, hoar frost, and April showers keep the labourer aloof from the vineyards except during the harvest. Then, however, a certain humidity is desirable. "You must," says this respected treatise, "try not to pluck except on days with a heavy dew, and, in warm seasons, after a shower. This moisture gives the grapes an azure bloom outside, and within a coolness which keeps them from heating. A foggy day is something to be glad of. The plucking begins half an hour after sunrise, and if the day is cloudless, and it becomes rather hot towards nine or ten o'clock, you must then stop. Not all the grapes are to be gathered without discrimination, nor at any hour of the day. The ripest and those of the deepest purple are to be chosen first. A hundred pickers will go through a vineyard of thirty acres in three or four hours to make an early vat of ten or twelve pieces." It was easy to picture the scene on these sunny slopes during the first week or two of October. But it was sad to see the comparative smallness of the bunches this year. There was no lack of witness, oral as well as ocular, to the exceeding poverty of the vintage of 1891. The long winter and the subsequent rain had played terrible havoc among the vines.

One is by no means among vineyards all the way between Epernay and Rheims. The two places are separated by a stout mountain with many a square mile of forest on the level summit; and the road traverses this woodland straight as a needle. It is quite a lonely part of the world. The railway does not trouble it. Wild boar and deer have it much to themselves except during the hunting-season; and in the heart of it, by a little clearing near the road, I came upon "the image of our Lady, adored from time immemorial in this place." It was nailed to an oak tree, having been replaced there in 1880, "and solemnly

blessed in the midst of a crowd by the Archbishop of Rheims." Of course too there was a strong box adjacent. This was guarded by three padlocks, so that one might assume it was not a penurious coffer. But the mosquitoes were so virulent round about the shrine in the cool shade that I did not tarry long enough to give a single pilgrim the chance to appear with a donation.

With the beginning of the forest on the Epernay side of the mountain the vineyards cease. Nor do they reappear where the road falls to the north towards the great towers of the cathedral looming large above the houses of the city in the plain. Here corn and beetroot are in the ascendant, and there is so little shade that in the dog-days the long undeviating road of a dozen kilometres must be somewhat purgatorial. Even upon this ordinary September afternoon I rejoiced to reach the brand-new houses of the suburbs, which sprawl away into brick-yards and disaffected grain-fields like the suburbs of other large towns. But high above this unlovely quarter were the cherished cathedral towers, and the bells from the belfry loosed their music upon the air and sent the ancient jackdaws of the place circling from their perches upon the stone heads of saints, martyrs, and monarchs.

Rheims cannot be termed a very vivacious city. I would even call it dull were I not deterred by the knowledge that there are millions of bottles of champagne beneath its streets. But it really is not anything like so sparkling as it ought to be. True, it has sundry public places in which nursemaids and the aged promenaded methodically, tram-cars in its streets, a theatre, and an exhilarating history. You may buy a glass of champagne in its shops for thirty *centimes*, and completely lose count of common life in an attempt to identify the stone images encrusting the façade of the cathedral. Nevertheless it does not cast upon the visitor those sudden

bonds of fascination with which other places, perhaps less distinguished, ensnare the affections.

I had heard that the hotel in which Joan of Arc was lodged during the coronation of Charles VII. still existed and received guests. To this house therefore I went, and herein I obtained a bedroom whence I could see about fifty square yards of the cathedral front and the towers with the jackdaws bustling in and out of the belfry. But I found I was under a certain misconception. Joan herself had never been bedded in the old place, the tiers of galleries about the inner courtyard of which were reminiscent of the ages. She no doubt had stateroom lodging at the Archbishop's over the way. But her father and mother, good honest folks, had been brought hither, and were here treated at the city's expense. In the vestibule of the hotel there was a copy of the document by which the Council agreed that the old couple should be housed and lodged gratis. There was also an extremely ornate room designed to transport the visitor into that fifteenth century which was not altogether one of triumph for the English arms. Here I might smoke and read in Gothic ease, and look my fill at certain large frescoes illustrating scenes in the life of the poor Maid. But they were frescoes designed rather to satisfy a Frenchman than to exalt an Englishman in his own esteem. In those days the inn was called *L'Ane Rayé*, which seems susceptible of various translations. Now that nearly six centuries have passed since Joan's burning at Rouen, it is known as the *Maison Rouge*.

After dinner the gentle tedium of the place was fully declared. My fellow guests at the meal were large elderly men with white hair who said nothing to each other but accepted the common interchanges of civility with courtly bows and the most complete politeness. The waiters were like unto my companions,—old and worn, but as respectable and pleasant to behold

as a meerschaum pipe in the twentieth year of its coloration. They could not have treated us with more consideration had we been princes of the blood,—from Russia. But when afterwards I consulted the youngest of these veterans about the disposal of the ensuing hours, he looked at me in blank bewilderment. My bedroom candle, he assured me, was ready. This at half-past eight in the evening, after a dinner of ten courses! Nor could he be persuaded to see that I might be disinclined to follow the example of the mass of inhabitants in this city of a hundred thousand souls, in retiring to bed at ten o'clock. In effect, however, that is what I did. I smoked my cigar at a *café* where certain shameless young men were gambling for *sous*, and certain others sat rigid and silent looking at them. Then I strolled into the long *Place Drouet d'Erlon*, where the stumpy little houses and fat bow-windows intruding far upon the pavement bore eloquent testimony to the age of the architecture, and where, behind the doors of two or three eating-houses (with champagne at thirty *centimes* the glass), I heard sounds of mild revelry which seemed to shock the stray passers-by. And afterwards I returned to the hotel, was greeted with a benevolent smile of approval from an old waiter, and sent to bed, where I slept until the bells of the cathedral awoke me at five the next morning, and recalled to my mind that I was under an engagement to become intimately acquainted with the champagne of Rheims in the course of the day.

But before presenting myself at the great House of Heidsieck, I paid my respects to the interior of the cathedral. It does not impress like the exterior; yet there is enough of hallowed calm here to deter one from the audacity of comparing it unfavourably with other cathedrals. A magnificent official in a cocked hat, silk stockings, and a sword trod the aisle like one at home in it. The Archbishop himself could not have looked more imposing.

There chanced this morning to be a service of an uncommon kind. Several years back a number of tailors of the city formed a benevolent society, the chief object of which was the relief of the necessitous. The Church also was implicated in this good intention. Annually the worthy tailors were to meet in the cathedral and celebrate their anniversary, not unattended by positive proofs of the excellent deeds they had done and were about to do. This was the explanation of the troop of little girls in snow-white muslin, gossamer veils, and with bouquets in their hands; of the small boys with rosettes in their buttonholes, and their faces wearing the conspicuous glaze of a recent and unwonted visitation; and of sundry impatient old gentlemen with white gloves and shiny black clothes which (remembering their vocation) sat with but little grace upon them. The majestic official did his best to restrain the excitement of these various associates of the tailors' benefaction until the arrival of the little acolytes in scarlet with tall candles, and also of the clergy who were to conduct the service. With these newcomers came two large baskets of loaves, and also a smaller one containing discreet slices of bread. Then the service began, the elderly members of the congregation being honoured with seats near the high altar, which enabled them periodically to gaze with extreme severity upon the young acolytes, who smiled consumedly at the bread, and at the tailors even, during the Mass itself. Indeed, one of the lads was so overcome with the humour of the scene, that the officiating priest paused in the service to reprove him by a look that he ought not soon to have forgotten. This, remember, at the high altar of the first cathedral of France! Afterwards, there was a collection, and simultaneously, as a *quid pro quo*, one of the tailors went about with the basket of loose slices of bread, distributing them at random. To the priest who had just said the responses he

gave a piece, and also to the small acolyte who had behaved so badly. The little boys with rosettes, and the self-conscious little girls in bridal attire, also participated in the charity, and straightway began to eat their pieces with great heartiness and smiling glances this way and that. All which, combined with the proud yet nervous air of the parchmented little tailor who made the doles, was again quite too much for the naughty acolyte, who had to retire behind the altar with the censor to compose himself.

Of its kind I have seen few ceremonies more interesting than this of the tailors in the cathedral of Rheims. It was so distinctly redolent of long past times, when the various guilds of a town were bodies as potent as they were respectable. The fussy little tailors seemed to be not unaware of the interest they excited, which added yet keener zest to the service. But when it was over, and they had come out of the exclusive precincts of the choir (where they are thus privileged to sit once a year) their talk among us of the common world was of no very dignified nature. I had the misfortune to be an auditor of a heated argument between the three smallest and fussiest of the men about the restaurant at which they were now to meet and breakfast together, in honour of their anniversary. The one tailor praised the restaurant he nominated, and the other two each had a preference of their own. So it went on for minutes, until, with a mild condescending smile, the magnificent be-sworded guardian of the cathedral urged all the tailors to the west portal, and bowed them into the open air.

During the long day of its existence Rheims Cathedral has seen many a thousand such scenes as this. But the fashions have vastly changed in the meanwhile. Doublets are not now what they were when Charles VII. went in state up the aisle to bring new hope to France; nor are

church ceremonies. In the old days a guild festival of this kind would have been attended by the citizens and their wives and daughters by the hundred. But to the few townsfolk and others who watched the ceremony on this occasion it was merely a starched bit of a spectacle, more apt to tickle the laughter in a man than to excite his reverence.

From the cathedral it is no long walk to the Rue de Sedan, where the producers of Dry Monopole have their offices. I expected to find myself in an atmosphere elevating with the diffused bouquet of champagne. But the cellars of Messrs. Heidsieck are a considerable distance from their offices, and there was not so much as a cork visible in the place to hint at the nature of the business here so abundantly conducted. Perhaps it is as well that it is so. It is said that the very fumes of the cellars sometimes prove too much for the head of a weakly man. And I myself can vouch for the fact that they become distinctly nauseating after even two or three hours.

It is not the custom with the champagne-merchants of Rheims to treat their workmen and workwomen as the traditional confectioner treats his apprentice. They do not in fact attempt to breed in them a distaste for champagne. That I suppose were a crime of high treason against the majesty of the noble vine. In the premises of Pommery, indeed, it is the vogue to offer one glass of champagne daily to the persons employed. That taken before work begins may well be thought to serve as an agreeable and useful stimulant to labour. But the common beverage in the cellars is a good, sound, red wine, which is dispensed to the workers in no stinted measure. I am told that there are members of the fair sex at Heidsieck's (cork-stampers, bottle-markers, &c.) who dispose of four quart bottles of red wine during their ten hours of work. The men too are a thirsty race. Madame Pommery is less lavish with her ser-

vants. She allows them a couple of bottles each in the day, which seems adequate.

From the ground floor of the spacious warehouse into which one enters from the inner courtyard of Messrs. Heidsieck's premises, a shaft descends vertically about a hundred and fifty feet into the ground. It is sunk through solid chalk. From the main shaft there are three lateral galleries which connect with each other by staircases. These galleries hold the millions of bottles of champagne which are the necessary equipment of a first-rate modern Rheims House. The vertical shaft is of course for mechanical purposes only. Here is a machine and an endless chain, which lift the wine to the surface in cases. The wine is made (if the word may be used where "fabricated" would not do equally well) below, and packed for exportation above.

The temperature in these gloomy corridors cut in the native rock never varies from about 46° Fahr. In winter the men enjoy it for its mildness; but in summer it seems far from genial. The excessive dampness too must be prejudicial in many cases. If you touch the heavy canvas screens which divide the galleries, you feel that you could squeeze quarts of water from them, and the walls of course reek with moisture. Yet there is really not a degree too much of cold, nor one drop too much of humidity in the cellars. All this is necessary to tame the high spirits of the Champagne wine. The loss by bursting bottles is enormous, even under these conditions of discomfort for mortals and restraint for wine.

There is electric light in the cellars but its lustre seems much abated by the prevalent gloom and oppressive humidity. The men working among the bottles thirty yards away are but dimly visible. And what tedious uninspiring work some of it is! Imagine, for instance, a person spending ten hours of continuous toil in lifting bottles from their racks, giving them a

turn or two, and replacing them. This too in absolute solitude, in a slip of a gallery deviating from a main corridor, and curtained off from the hollow sound of his comrades' voices in the distance by the wet sackcloth at the opening. No doubt, with men of conscience and concentration, this loneliness serves well enough in the interests of the firm. A deft workman will, it is said, turn from five-and-twenty to thirty thousand bottles daily. This is his work day after day. It is one of the various processes which give us a wine clear as crystal, from which almost every particle of sediment has been coaxed and expelled. But it does not suit all men. Some cannot stand the dismal monotony, which really seems almost on a par with certain of the experiences of a Siberian exile. Life in the champagne cellars does not tend to length of days. After a spell of years in such employment the man seems to have become unfitted for continuous existence above the ground and in a drier air. While he is daily in the damp atmosphere of 45° or 46°, and supported by a daily magnum or two of good red wine, he has not much to complain about. But afterwards he is apt to fall to pieces. Fifty-five is reckoned a good age for him to attain.

Of the various details of the making of good champagne none is more interesting than the final stage, immediately precedent to the second and last corking. This occurs when the wine has been in bottle long enough to have had all the sediment brought towards the cork by the systematic turning and the general inclination of the bottle itself. If you look at the sediment in such a bottle you may well be surprised at its bulk and apparent solidity. It shows itself as a substance by the cork from half an inch to an inch in length. The contrast of its whiteness with the pellucid gold of the nether wine is quite curious. And it is from this stratum of fine white particles, the crystallised tartar of the wine, that

each bottle has successively to be freed by the process known as *dégagement*, though more often called *disgorgement*.

Much depends upon the skill of the "disgorger" as we will call the man who sits at his work, and takes bottle after bottle to operate upon. Unless he can time his movements to the second, he is more than likely to spill an unnecessary amount of the pure wine in expelling the sediment. This, with millions of bottles, of course would mean the sacrifice of a vast deal of wine. The disgorgers are therefore the best paid men in the champagne vaults. At Heidsieck's a method is in vogue which freezes the sediment so that it comes out as a lump of ice. The bottle is then passed by the disgorger to another man who fills the vacuum caused by the removal of this substance with champagne liqueur. Some people suppose that brandy is used for this purpose, but that is a popular error.

With all possible speed the bottle passes finally to the corker, who soon solves the riddle of how a cork with a natural diameter of an inch and a quarter can be got into a bottle mouth having a diameter of but three quarters of an inch. Fifty years ago the corking was done in the old-fashioned way, with a strong arm and a mallet. The bottles then sometimes broke to pieces under the vigorous blows they had to bear, and the bottler bottled at his peril. It still happens of course that in disgorging its sediment occasionally a bottle flies to pieces and endangers the disgorger. But upon the whole the risks are much less than they were. Improvements in the processes of champagne-making are not infrequent; yet there is still an opening for the inventive mind. There is, as the phrase runs, a fortune at hand for the man who can design a non-absorptive cork.

It is quite a relief to emerge from the damp chill home of these millions of bottles of champagne, and to glance at the women above working in the

blessed daylight and breathing a more congenial air. Here are sacks of corks, and the dames and girls may be seen giving the impress of Dry Monopole to one cork after another. The cork itself is of the best obtainable quality; with a little search among the stamped pieces, you may discover some of a material as smooth as planed deal.

The wrapping of the tinfoil round the necks of the bottles and the labelling are also women's work. It is interesting to learn that the red foil bottles are for Germany. They indicate a sweeter wine than that which goes to England. Canning once said that the man who declared that he preferred dry champagne to sweet lied unblushingly. This was of course a candid confession of inexperience on the part of the statesman. His words would be received with polite incredulity among the people of Rheims. And certainly, after drinking a bottle of Dry Monopole here among the models of old champagne bottles during the last century, one has no desire for anything sweeter. My guide informed me that he has more than once taken as much as four bottles of the wine without inconvenience. The occasions were festive and exceptional; but his words were none the less a compliment both to the wine and to his own head and stomach.

It must not be thought, in spite of the immense and growing consumption of champagne all over the world, that the trade of wine-merchant in Rheims is one of sure and easy prosperity. Perhaps only one year in twelve can be termed a good vintage. The man without enough capital to wait for the good vintages to balance the bad ones must not hope to make a reputation and the fortune that follows a reputation. There must, too, be an immense sum invested in reserve wines, especially in a house like Heidsieck's, which relies mainly upon the production of a wine of uniform quality. Dry Monopole is Dry Monopole all the world over. If you are sure the bottle before you contains this, you know

exactly what pleasure is in store for you. But the makers of Dry Monopole have toiled about a hundred years for their fame. I ask upon what amount of capital a house like theirs could be established, and am told that with five or six millions of francs the experiment might be made. As for the result of the experiment, however, it would be like tossing up a coin and crying *head or tail*.

One set of cellars in Rheims much resembles another. There is, however, something peculiarly captivating to the imagination in the larger and loftier vaults of the great House of Pommery. Here the eye is appealed to much more than in the galleries of Messrs. Heidsieck. There is no electric lighting, but the daylight descends in places down huge yawning shafts pierced in the chalk. The Romans are said to have begun these useful excavations in Rheims, and Messrs. Pommery and Greno have much improved upon their freehold of old Rome's labours. The number of bottles here may be two or three times as many as in Heidsieck's cellars. It is impossible to give an exact account. There are miles of them, with from twelve to fifteen million bottles by the wayside; and between five and six hundred men and women attend to them.

Bearing in mind the vastness of the supply, it does not seem that the champagne-makers of Rheims act with an imprudent generosity in offering as they do bottle after bottle of their choicest wine to their casual visitors. It is, however, an act of very precious courtesy. Thus, having in the morning drunk a bottle and a half of Dry Monopole, I was privileged in the afternoon to be able to compare it with Pommery's 1884. This is the date of the last good champagne year. The cellarer (a gentleman of standing, for all his blue smock) has no doubt of your verdict as he pours the aromatic fluid into your glass. It is as clear as spring water, and the colour of a sulphur crystal. The bottles thus

opened for the tourist may, I suppose, be counted by the thousand annually. But it is enough to remember the historic ravaging of the cellars of M. Moët of Epernay during the Revolutionary wars to realise that good may come out of such apparent sacrifice. The Russians relieved M. Moët of about six hundred thousand bottles. That would of course have ruined a small man; but M. Moët could afford to wait; and soon after the war he found that he received twice as many orders from Russia as before. That immeasurable country continues to be a valued client both in Epernay and Rheims,—though it is not reputed to be the best of judges between genuine and fictitious champagne.

There are other names to conjure with here within sound of the bold bells of the cathedral besides Heidsieck and Pommery; but they need not be enumerated. They are at least as well known as the names of certain crowned heads of the Eastern hemisphere. Are they not on every wine list throughout the world, and have they not the agreeable consciousness that they are factors of innocent exhilaration in a thousand households every day in the year? That is the best of good champagne; it is absolutely harmless. Ere the year 1652, certain French physicians had conceived the idea that it might produce gout. This was a terrible charge. It of course affected the claim of the wine to its pre-eminence in the realm. In that year therefore a discussion was opened as to the superiority of champagne or burgundy. The learned doctors debated on the matter until five generations had passed away. In 1778, however, it was judicially decreed that champagne was the first wine in the world. As for the cruel charge brought against it, the *Maison Rustique*, already quoted, may again be relied upon for its information: "It is an error to suppose that champagne can give the gout. There is not a single gouty person in all the province; which is the best possible proof."

In the valley of the Marne the wine is annually toasted at meeting after meeting. It would be difficult to conceive an article of commerce more worthy of such attentions, or more able to inspire eloquence on behalf of itself. Apologists for it also continue to rise to their feet with the familiar long-bodied glasses in their hands, and to utter their warm protest against the mere idea that had entered the heads of the doctors of the last century. "I affirm in defiance of all doctors," said a gentleman in public only the other day at Ay, "that champagne is the wine of health itself, and that it is always on good terms with the man who drinks it, even though immoderately; that it has never occasioned a suicide [a sad hit at our old English habit of port drinking!]; that it agrees perfectly with the most delicate of stomachs; and that if it may sometimes have sent its votaries to sleep—an innocent crime—such slumber was full of sweet dreams and desirable visions!" It would be hard to surpass such eulogy.

One is prone to wonder if Joan of Arc indulged in champagne when she stayed here in 1429. That it was offered her there can be no reasonable doubt; but she may have had scruples, poor girl, which withheld her from the enjoyment of such material pleasures. Other remarkable visitors to Rheims were, however, deterred by no such scruples. King Wenceslaus of Bohemia is one of the most memorable of the willing victims of champagne. He came to Rheims in 1397, to contrive a treaty with the King of France; and when he had tasted the wine of Rheims he was so enamoured of it that he appeared likely never to terminate his diplomatic business. Day after day he intoxicated himself on champagne, and it seemed as if State affairs and his pleasures would keep him under the shadow of the great cathedral till he died. We may doubt if this monarch had much discrimination in what he drank. But probably the allurements of a debauch unattended by headaches

and remorse were as strong an attraction for him in Rheims as the bouquet of the wine itself.

In those days the best of good wine in France proceeded from the cellars of the different abbeys and monasteries; and no doubt it was the same here in Rheims. It is to the monks and their careful nursing of the wine that we owe the superb wines of our time. Chartreuse, Clos-Vougeot, and Chambertin are names that compel respect of a kind for monastic institutions, even from fanatics the most intolerant of the Church. One may readily imagine, therefore, that in Rheims, the seat of the highest Church dignitary of France, the cellars have never lacked good wine during about a millennium and a half.

Champagne is said to have reached its present degree of excellence at the time of the assassination of King Henry IV. in 1610. Ere then, however, the rulers of Europe had each possessed vineyards of their own on these bright slopes near the Marne; Henry VIII. of England, Pope Leo X., and Charles V. of Spain. We may suppose that even in those days certain tricks of adulteration and counterfeit were in vogue. It was much, therefore, to be assured of having a pure wine straight from the vineyards of Ay.

During the long reign of Louis XIII. champagne grew in appreciation. At the Court it doubtless witnessed many a scene that would have soured the spirit of a less generous wine. In the cellars of Pommery and Greno one is reminded of the revels of the Palais Royal by a certain impressive alto-relief chiselled in the chalk by a modern sculptor of Rheims. It represents a champagne feast of the eighteenth century, in which ladies and gentlemen, who might have stepped from one of Watteau's canvases, and goblets of wine are in very lively association. The light from above upon this respectable work of art makes the white figures stand forth in the half-gloom

with a convincing effect. From Louis the Great little in contempt of champagne was likely to proceed. In fact, it is said that he drank nothing but champagne until he was an old man. Then his physician thought well to advise burgundy in its stead. Two years later the King died. This too is of course an invincible testimony of the life-preserving as well as life-giving properties of the incomparable beverage. Every modern doctor of experience knows the value of champagne, and can tell of patients who have been kept alive upon it, and upon little else, for months or even years. Louis Quatorze was but one among the thousands who have leased existence from it.

According to the French, the great Napoleon, like the great Louis, was a staunch admirer and a constant drinker of champagne. But authorities differ as to whether or no it held the first place among beverages in his esteem. The poet Moore ascribes this honour to a wine of Burgundy:

Chambertin, which you know's the pet
tipple of Nap.

It is well also to remember that after Waterloo, when we captured his travelling-carriage, two bottles were taken with it, containing respectively rum and malaga. However, even as a man has many other inclinations and appetites besides the master ambition of his soul, so Napoleon may have indulged in these meaner fluids without forswearing allegiance to champagne. Talleyrand, we know, termed champagne "the wine of civilisation, *par excellence*."

There is in short no end to the fine things that have been said about this simple straw-coloured fluid which seethes with such a cheerful murmur from its heavy bottle. Rheims may well be a proud little city. Its cathedral and its wine are matchless. With such credentials it can afford to be somewhat dull.

CHARLES EDWARDES.

POLITICS AND INDUSTRY.

IN Europe there is at present no "military problem." There are, undoubtedly, discussions on the chances of war and on the degree of efficiency to which particular armies have attained, but there is no military problem in the sense in which there is an "industrial problem." In other words, there is no difference of opinion as to the relation of the army to the State. It is admitted on all sides that military efficiency is not to be left to chance, but is a thing that governments must attend to; and it is admitted that the State does not exist in order to keep up an army, but the army in order to preserve the State. Nor is it any longer necessary to devise means by which military efficiency may be rendered compatible with any type of political institutions. These are determined by the general political movement; while the type of military organisation is determined independently by military exigencies.

This was not always so. There have been times when it was necessary to prove by elaborate argument that if it has too little strength for war a nation cannot be sure of maintaining its existence. On the other side, too great military efficiency has presented itself as a danger to free institutions, and schemes have been worked out by political thinkers for combining freedom with the national strength which they saw to be necessary. Thus the question was not simply how to bring to bear the knowledge of experts on a public opinion that was in agreement about the end, but ignorant of the means. Theories as to the form military organisation should take were involved with disputed questions about the political structure of society. General ideas, arrived at by reasoning on facts accessible to every one, had

still a share in modifying the course of events. Partly by the influence of such general ideas, and partly by the conflict of forces, a solution capable of lasting for a time has been at length attained. Anything in advance of the present solution—any kind of international organisation, for example—now seems more out of the range of speculation than it did in the eighteenth century.

The cessation of the military problem as a question of general politics has been accompanied by the rise of the industrial problem. There have been times, of course, when there was no "industrial problem." A certain industrial system was accepted by every one, and all change that was introduced in it came about through unconscious processes; or, more exactly, through processes not determined by any conscious effort on the part of society to shape the industrial system as it ought to be. So far as there was any conscious collective effort, it was simply an effort to promote prosperity within the lines of the existing system. It need hardly be said that the present is not a time when this is all that is aimed at. The whole attitude of society or of the State towards industry has become a question for conscious deliberation. The question is not simply to find the means of attaining an end that is agreed upon. There is no agreement even as to the general form of the solution. This being so, the question is not one simply for experts. At its present stage, light may be thrown upon it by reasoning that proceeds on entirely general grounds; that is, without any reference to specific proposals.

The best means of throwing light upon the question in its general aspect

seems to be a classification of the chief possible solutions. There is at least a chance that the right solution may be arrived at by elimination of the wrong ones.

First, the solution known as *laissez faire* may be considered. The advocates of this solution may be most correctly described as industrial anarchists. In spite of disclaimers, this is the doctrine that furnishes the intellectual basis for nearly all attacks on "socialistic legislation." It is, perhaps, the first conscious attempt that has been made to solve the industrial problem. It owes its plausibility partly to the fact that it really embodies some truth, and partly to a confusion. The confusion consists in an identification of economical *laissez faire* with political freedom. The truth it contains is the clear conception of some results of the science known as political economy. When economists had shown that in particular kinds of commercial transaction, such as international trade, the country that does not interfere with the economical course of things will be the most prosperous commercially, it was an obvious practical inference that, whenever commercial prosperity is the thing desired, the State ought to let transactions of this particular kind alone. The *laissez faire* school drew the correct inference; but it proceeded to generalise it into a precept applicable at all times and places and to every kind of commercial and industrial transaction. No doubt exceptions were admitted, but they were admitted only as exceptions to a general rule. The line usually taken now is to go on admitting more and more exceptions, while yet continuing to maintain that the rule is true in its generality. Still this process, continued long enough, amounts to the rejection of *laissez faire* as a universal precept. By gradual concessions on the part of its practical defenders, it is being reduced to the position it was entitled to claim at first—that of a rule true in some particular cases. In

practice its application has been mitigated, both by survivals from an older state of things and by new modern legislation proceeding from motives not purely economical.

The type of society that consistent industrial anarchy tends to produce is the plutocratic; and its advocates are now mostly found among the friends of plutocracy. When no function of the State in relation to industry is recognised except that of clearing the ground for unlimited competition, the natural consequence is that everything is made subordinate to this kind of industrial struggle, and that those who are most proficient in it attain, together with wealth, the largest share of political power. With conscious or unconscious art, the industrial anarchists proclaim their cause to be that of individual freedom. Yet it is a fact that freedom, in its political sense, was understood and fought for long before the maxim of letting industry alone—whether right or wrong commercially—was heard of. And, when we look at the actual state of the case, the contradiction between individual freedom and regulation of industry by law is seen to be quite illusory. The operations of the greater industry—and this is what it is commonly proposed to regulate—are part of an immense and complicated mechanism where there is no room for really free contract in matters of detail between individual employers and workmen. The action of the mechanism, left to itself, is determined by the comparatively blind forces recognised in economics—love of gain and need of subsistence. State-intervention brings to bear upon it forces involving both more intelligence and more regard to ethical ends. By this means it sets the individual free, in a larger number of cases, to become more of an end for himself and less of an instrument for external ends. It thus increases the kind of freedom for which, according to one theory, the State exists.

Having dealt with the anarchical solution, we may proceed to deal with

its antithesis, the socialistic solution. This is to be distinguished here from what is called "socialistic legislation," or "State-socialism"; these being merely names applied to any mitigation of anarchy. Socialism, in its proper sense, must be taken to mean the actual conduct, by the central government or its subordinate governments and agents, of all industrial operations. It involves, of course, the substitution of collective for individual property. The purely economical argument against socialism is that it would be less efficient in producing wealth. Work done under the direct compulsion of social authority would be badly done; and absence of the hope that exists where there is room for competition would further depress all energies. When socialism is considered on more general grounds, the argument is urged that private property is essential to individual freedom. Neither of these arguments can really be answered. And the contention that genuine socialism is incompatible with individual freedom is completely confirmed by recent popular literature on the socialistic side. To these arguments it may be added, that socialism has in common with the opposite system the defect of regarding society too exclusively from the economical point of view. For the industrial anarchist, the State is there chiefly to make sure that the action of economical forces is not interfered with. If these by themselves tend to produce a certain type of society, all that remains for the individual is to adapt himself to it. Bringing other social forces into play is not to be thought of. The tendency of commercial competition is to become fiercer. Let us then consider the type that is most successful under fierce competition and try to become like that. Anything that will "pay" is as "liberal" as anything else if intelligently studied. Then let us study intelligently what will pay. On his side, the socialist would exact from everybody labour which could be proved before some social authority to be useful. And

such compulsion would be made practicable, and would be made to press on all alike (except perhaps the officials) by the absence of individual property and free contract. Thus, especially, all serious æsthetic pursuits would be rendered impossible (except perhaps when the favour of authority could be gained). For the socialist, the State exists first as an industrial mechanism, and all that is not industrial is a superfluous accompaniment of its working. In short, consistent socialism, when examined, turns out to be as soulless as plutocracy.

A solution different from either of those that have been discussed is accepted by Positivists and Catholics. This may be called the hierocratic solution. Private property is allowed, but its use is to be ordered in accordance with a uniform religious doctrine theoretically elaborated and applied to practice by a priesthood. Capital, according to the Positivists, is to be "moralised." That is to say, capitalists are to regulate the distribution of wealth in the interests of workmen. This could not be secured without some social power separate from the body of capitalists; and the power is found in a Church. A moral public opinion, practically irresistible by individuals, is to be formed and wielded by an organised "spiritual power" independent of the State. The solution recently propounded for the acceptance of Catholics does not differ from this essentially; though the theological doctrine of the Church in the two cases is of course not the same. One merit may be acknowledged in this solution. A wider view of society is taken than in the two others. All social activities are recognised, and not simply economical activity. On the other hand, they are recognised only to be controlled by the doctrine and discipline of a universal Church. No amount of material comfort diffused to any conceivable extent is worth this price. To permit either an old or a new Church to take the place claimed for it would involve the

suppression of intellectual liberty. Now intellectual liberty, whatever may be the aspirations of the "authoritative" schools, is not a mere incident of a "period of transition," but a permanent conquest of philosophic thought and of the development of the modern State.

The solution which remains to be considered, and which the course of the argument has gradually brought into view, is the doctrine of State-control or State-regulation of industry according to the best ideas and knowledge attainable at the time. This, in distinction from the others, may be called the political solution. It is untouched by any of the arguments that have been fatal to the rest. In essence, it is the doctrine that has been instinctively acted upon both in ancient and modern States. When a mistaken industrial policy was pursued in the past, this was not because the State failed to recognise the limits of its own general sphere of action, but

because it was ignorant of some particular law of economics. The remedy is not to exclude as many industrial questions as possible from the sphere of State-action, but to gain the most accurate knowledge of the conditions of particular problems and then to apply it both negatively and positively; and not simply for the maintenance of prosperity, but for the transformation of the industrial system itself. This does not imply State-ownership of all capital, which is the socialistic solution; but it implies that no limit shall be recognised to the action of the State upon industry except the knowledge that action would be injurious to the Commonwealth. Where there is doubt there may be action or abstinence from action according to the probabilities of the case. At a time like the present, when the industrial system is comparatively plastic, the bias ought to be in favour of action.

THOMAS WHITTAKER.

A LONDON ROSE.

DIANA, take this London rose,
 Of crimson grace for your pale hand,
 Who love all loveliness that grows :
 A London rose—ah, no one knows,
 A penny bought it in the Strand !

But not alone for heart's delight ;
 The red has yet a deeper stain
 For your kind eyes that, late by night,
 Grew sad at London's motley sight
 Beneath the gaslit driving rain.

And now again I fear you start
 To find that sorry comedy
 Re-written on a rose's heart :
 'Tis yours alone to read apart,
 Who have such eyes to weep and see.

Soon rose and rhyme must die forgot,
 But this, Diana—ah, who knows !—
 May die, yet live on in your thought
 Of London's fate, and his who bought
 For love of you a London rose.

ERNEST RHYS.

THE FOUR STUDENTS.

A BARE attic room; on a wooden table one candle only in a wooden candlestick, and the candle was in snuff. Raynaud paused in his reading for the bad light, and Gavaudun snuffed the wick with his fingers. Then they all remained for a moment pensive, listening to the sounds of the night. For the wind had arisen again, and the leaded windows rattled; and from below came the monotonous low groan of the street lamp swaying to and fro upon its chain. The room, which the four students shared in common, contained little else save their four truckle-beds, beside each of which stood a pail for washing purposes. There were four chairs and the wooden table, round three sides of which they were sitting, close against the fire, for the night was bitterly cold. Blank darkness looked in upon them through the two lattice windows, which had neither shutter nor blind. The house had once been a hotel standing in its own grounds, but was now compressed into the Rue Pot-de-Fer, close to the corner where that street ran into the Rue des Postes. It lay in the quarter much frequented by Parisian students, just outside that densely packed district known in those days as l'Université. At the end of their street, beyond its junction with the Rue des Postes and at the end of the Rue des Postes itself, stood two of the thousand barriers which shut in Paris proper.

It was in the winter of 1787. The world without, though these four recked little of it, was in a ferment, nominally because the King's Minister, Loménie de Brienne, was at loggerheads with the Parliament of Paris; really because the times were big with much greater issues which no man then foresaw.

The wind softened a little, the win-

dows rattled less, and Raynaud took up his book again. It was a book which he had bought that day off a stall on the Petit Pont. Le Bossu du Petit Pont, as the keeper of the stall was called, was a familiar figure to most of the students of that quarter. On examination it proved to be the work *De Invocatione Spirituum*, by Johannes Moguntiensis, or John of Menz; a man whom Cornelius Agrippa speaks of several times in his *Philosophia Occulta*, and in his familiar letters, as having been in some sort his master. Raynaud read on, and the others, —Sommarel, Gavaudun, Tourret—listened rather languidly to the Latin of the magician, as he set forth the processes by which might be formed between two, three, or four persons (but best of all if they were four) a mystic chain so called, "each one with the others," and how the supernal powers were to be conjured to aid the work. The author was at once prolix and obscure; and none of the four, not even the reader, paid strict attention to his words.

"But, hold!" said Tourret; "what did you say? *In Vigila Nativitatis*—why it is precisely the Eve of Noel that we are in to-night."

"And so it is! If we were to try the charm?" said Gavaudun.

"Excellent! we will do so."

"John of Menz come to our aid!" said Sommarel, folding his hands.

"Tush! You don't invoke John of Menz," said Gavaudun. "Let me see, whom have we got to call upon?"

"Oh, *Diabolus*, I suppose, or the *Anima Mundi*, the Soul of the World," said Tourret.

"Nonsense," said Gavaudun, who had taken up the book.

Glad of a little change they all rose up. "We have to inscribe a pentacle, the Pentacle of Mars, on the floor."

said Raynaud. "Then prick our arms and transfer the blood from one vein to another, he directs."

"No, you say the incantation or conjuration first," said Gavaudun, as he turned back to an earlier page. As he did so a sort of tune seemed to be running in his head. They scratched the pentacle on the floor with a rusty iron nail, and each took his stand in one of the angles. Then Gavaudun shouted out the conjuration:—"I conjure and require you,—Ja, Pa, Asmodai, Aleph, Beleph, Adonai, Gormo, Mormo, Sadai, Galzael, Asrael, Tangon, Mangon, Porphael!" It was not precisely thus that the words were written; but they seemed to come out of his mouth in this sort of chant; and all the four took it up and sang, "Galzael, Asrael, Tangon, Mangon, Porphael!" till the roof echoed. Then they stopped suddenly and stared at one another. They were all in a sweat; but each one laughed. Of course that was part of the joke; the other three had been roaring like that for a joke, but each one felt that for himself the chanting had been a mere contagion, had come out of him without his will.

"*O vos omnes, spiritus terreni, invocamus et convocamus vos!* Ye spirits of the earth, we call and conjure you! Be ye our aiders and confederates, and fulfil whatever we demand!" Gavaudun with a solemn mien pronounced this prayer. "Now for the drop of blood!" And he turned round to the table to re-read the passage of John of Menz. He seemed to take the lead now, while Raynaud did everything in a reluctant, half-mechanical way as one walking in his sleep. They had all been sitting without their coats, as the custom was in those days; two in loose dressing-gowns, one in a light jacket, and one in shirt sleeves. As they stood in the pentacle they took off these outer garments, or turned up the sleeves of them to bare their arms. Each one made with his pen-knife or stiletto a small incision in his arm, a little blood

was squeezed out, according to the prescription, and exchanged against a drop of blood from his neighbour's arm, which, as well as it might be, was conducted into the wound made to receive it. It took time; for each one had to make the exchange with his neighbour; each had to make two pricks upon his arm, for only so could he be sure that he had not squeezed out again the foreign blood just imported.

"Quick!" said Sommarel. "It is near twelve, and the whole must be done on the Eve of the Nativity."

"There ought to be five of us," said Tourret, "to fill all the five angles."

"No; it specially says not more than four. I suppose the Terrestrial Spirit, whose names we have been reciting, fills up the fifth angle."

"Why Raynaud and I have not exchanged yet," said Gavaudun, as the others held out their hands to complete the mystic circle.

"*Bon Dieu*, we cannot wait any longer. You see it is just twelve."

They linked hands and shouted once more in chorus and to the self-same chant: "Ja, Pa, Asmodai, Aleph, Beleph, Adonai, Gormo, Mormo, Sadai," and the rest. Louder and louder they called, the sweat pouring down their foreheads. A wanderer of the night, supperless in the bitter cold, looked up at their windows which shone like a high beacon, heard the shout, and in his heart cursed those jovial revellers as he supposed them to be. Then from the neighbouring church of St. Geneviève rang over the compact mass of roofs the first notes of the clock, and next a chime of bells. Raynaud tore his hands from the others; a look of terror was in his face.

"That was famous!" said Sommarel, bursting into a laugh.

II.

THIS room in the R Pot-de-Fe was for the four students no more than an inn on the high road of life. In six

months they had separated again, and gone their different ways. It was now nearly six years since they had lived together in that room. Gavaudun had left Paris to become a professor at Lille, and, young as he still was, was a man already distinguished. On the capture of Lille he had become an Austrian subject, and had left Revolutionary France for ever. Sommarel was practising the law in his native town. Tourret had married a rich wife and had disappeared from ken. Only Raynaud remained behind in the old room.

Since the four had parted the Revolution had begun, and had marched along its appointed way. At first Raynaud had taken his share in all the excitement of the time. He had been among the crowd when the Bastille fell. He had followed the procession of women to Versailles, and seen the King carried to Paris in triumph. But during the last two years all energy seemed to have ebbed from him; and a fantastic pageant of events had passed him, he himself taking no part in what was going forward, scarcely even heeding it. Time after time the faubourg of St. Marcel hard by had risen in black wrath, had flowed out in its thousands to meet St. Antoine, to meet the Marseillais volunteers, to whirl and eddy round the Tuileries and the Hall of the National Convention; or had gone forth in frantic joy to take part in I know not what Feast of the Revolution, Feast of Reason, Fraternal Supper, as the occasion might be; and had flowed back again, neither the better nor the worse in its every day life for all its wild exhibitions of rage and hope. Over all this Raynaud looked from his high citadel as if he had no concern in these terrene matters. But his indifference was not born of philosophy, only of a strange dulness which he could not shake off.

He had remained the constant inhabitant of the same room. But not always its sole occupant. A succession of persons had lain upon one or other of the three tressel-beds left vacant by

Gavaudun, Sommarel, and Tourret; a strange procession of beings emblematical of the times: esurient lawyers from the provinces; disrobed *abbés* much given to cards; Jews come to deal, if it might be, in assignats and the *domaines nationaux*. Nor were the lighter occupations of life unrepresented in these grim times. Not long since three players from the Théâtre de Lyons had been his room-fellows. One of them had got an engagement at the Théâtre Français in the Rue de Bondi; the other two had come up to bear him company, and look out for work and play. The last co-occupant of the room had called himself a composer. People said that he was in reality a Royalist agent, and he had been haled to the guillotine. Nay, but he was a composer, whatever else he might be; for his companion had one or two fragments of songs set to music by him which he had left behind in his hurry. Raynaud was now left in his ancient room alone; he himself was under the protection of Citizen Fourmisson, formerly barber, now member of the Tribunal Criminel Révolutionnaire, who lived in the better apartments below, and whose children Raynaud taught. But it was best to keep one's self to one's self in these suspicious days; and at that moment Raynaud reckoned not a single friend in Paris.

Life had not gone well with him. He was thinking this as, one winter afternoon, he returned to his room after giving his accustomed lesson on the floor below, and in spite of the cold stood for a moment gazing out from his window over the view of plots and cottages and distant woods which it showed. The houses and cottages had become more frequent, the patches of land fewer, during the last six years; for the faubourg had grown considerably. Raynaud noticed this much; he knew nothing about the changes in the rest of Paris. During the last three years he had never once crossed the river. He knew nothing of the changed appearance of the Quai de

Grève since the conflagration, nothing of the new names which had been bestowed upon the parts of Paris near the Tuileries. Above all he had never been to the Place de la Révolution, nor seen the altar raised to the new patron saint of the City of Paris, la Sainte Guillotine. Certainly this indifference to the growth of the Republic, One and Indivisible, was in itself a thing suspect. But Citizen Fourmisson had his reasons for wishing to retain the services of the dreamy young tutor.

No; life had not gone well with him. Citizen Fourmisson paid his salary chiefly in the protection which his august name afforded. What Raynaud lived upon was a pittance due to him from his brother Gilbert, who cultivated the few patrimonial acres of Les Colombiers. "Why do I linger on here?" Raynaud thought, or half-thought. "What value is protection to a life so colourless as mine?" But then he realised that if he did talk of going, Fourmisson would without doubt denounce him at once. He thought of his last chamber-companion Briçonnet, the musician, the only one with whom he had made any sort of friendship; of the knocking which had mingled with Raynaud's dreams on that morning when the *sergents de ville* came to carry the poor composer off to the Luxembourg hard by; of the man's white face when he awoke, of how he had clutched at the bedstead and screamed to Raynaud to come to his help. The sergeants had searched everywhere, had ripped open the bed, but so far as Raynaud could see they had found nothing but scores of music. Most of the music they had carried away, but some scattered sheets remained. One contained the setting of a song by the unhappy Berthier de Saint Maur, who had been before then as little known to Raynaud as he was for long after to the English reader until, not long since, a critic unearthed him and translated some of his songs. It was a verse from the song of *Le Pèlerin* which was running in Raynaud's head now:

Alone, alone, no mortal thing so much
Alone! The eagle captured from the hills;
The solitary *chouan* when he fills
The air with discord; the cast mariner,
What time the spar parts from his frozen
clutch,

Are not so lone as I.—ah no, sweet sir!

Raynaud even tried to sing the tune, as he had heard Briçonnet sing it. Singing was not in his way; he got nowhere near the air; rather the words came out in an unearthly chant.

Then, suddenly, he was brought back to the scene in this very room, six years before, when he and the three others had chanted together a magic formula out of a book by,—by,—he forgot the name. The whole scene rose before his eyes; then faded as quickly. No; his life had not gone well since then. He had in those ambitious student days (he had always passed then for the cleverest of the four) planned that great work on the *Comité des Nations*, an extension of the doctrine of the social contract into the domain of national law. It was to inaugurate a new era. The plan of the book and its very name were identical with those of the work which Gavaudun had actually published in these years; and which even in the times in which they lived had made him famous. Had Gavaudun taken his idea? Had he, Raynaud, left much on record? Had he expounded it fully in those days? He could not remember now; but he thought he had drawn it all out later. Yet it could not be so; Gavaudun must have stolen the thought from him. But his spirits felt too dulled to allow of his feeling active resentment even for such a piece of plagiarism as that.

Then Tourret; that was stranger still. Tourret had acted out in real life what had been Raynaud's dream. He had almost from boyhood had that romance in his mind. How he was to be riding along the dangerous way where the main road to Tours branches off from the Orleans road, there where

the disused water-mill peeps out from among the trees,—that mill was always thought to be a rendezvous for foot-pads; how he was to overhear the two men planning the seizure of an approaching vehicle, was to ride past them receiving a shot through his hat (he remembered all the details), was to meet the coach in which sat an old father and a beautiful young daughter, to ride up (in imminent danger again of being shot) and give them warning. Alas, too late, for here are the two upon us! But the old father fires, he, Raynaud, fires, and the two rogues fall. But what if more are coming? So he offers his own horse to the father, and the daughter rides on pillion behind, Raynaud and the coachman driving after at the best rate they can make. The result, the eternal gratitude of the father and his, Raynaud's, ultimate marriage to the beautiful heiress. Such had been Raynaud's romance, elaborated in every detail. And three years ago it had fallen to Tourret actually to do this thing! The robbers from whom Tourret saved his future father-in-law were not common highwaymen, but two from the terrible band of the *chauffeurs*, wherefore his heroism had been the greater. Tourret had married the heiress, and had, it was thought, at the beginning of the troubles found his way out of France to Switzerland.

No; not well. And last night he had dreamt that a great treasure had been found on the farm at Les Colombiers. The dream was so vivid that even after he woke he had been speculating what he should do with the money, what new life he should lead. But now that his thoughts had run back into their accustomed sombre channel he saw things in a different light. He professed to be an enlightened thinker; but no small measure of rustic superstition lingered in his mind. Dreaming of a treasure he knew was reckoned a bad omen. Who knows what it might portend?

Musing of all these things Raynaud descended to take his walk. As he

passed along the passage at the bottom of the house the *concierge* stopped him with the familiar and, as we should call it, insolent action which one citizen used to another in those days, and always emphasised if he had to do with a man better born and better educated than himself.

"A despatch for you, citizen," he said.

The lower floor of this old hotel was now a wine-shop, and the two or three men in the room were grouped together examining a rather official-looking envelope bound round with a cord and sealed with black wax.

"Here is the citizen for the letter," said the *concierge*; and the man who was actually holding it handed the envelope to the porter without apology and without rising. "Good luck to the citizen with his letter," he said, turning back to the table to take up his glass.

The others laughed a little, and all eyed Raynaud rather curiously as he broke the seals. The idea of Government was in those days almost synonymous with the idea of Death. Therefore even an envelope with an official seal upon it, especially if the seal were black, suggested the vague possibility either that the citizen who received it was going to be guillotined himself, or else that one of his relatives had been—not here in Paris, perhaps, but down in the country.

Raynaud with the thoughts that had been running in his head could not help turning pale as he opened the letter. But it proved to be of a very inoffensive character, though for some reason the Bureau of Police had thought fit to open and read it and seal it up again in this official manner. It was from Raynaud's brother Gilbert. "My dear brother," he wrote. "The agriculture marches very ill here, no doubt in great measure because of the plots of Pitt and of the enemies of the Republic; but also because the workmen work not very willingly and there are not enough *métayers* to be found. It has happened that my brother-in-law Emile

Plaidoyer has lately died. Wherefore my father-in-law writes to offer me to work with him upon his farm of Guibrauche in Plessis-le-Pèlerin, where he prospers better than I. Now precisely at this moment comes an offer from Maistre Sommarel of Tours to buy Les Colombiers. He offers a good price for it, seven thousand livres. Wherefore if thou consent, my dear brother, the bargain shall be made and the instruments drawn up. D.G. Thy brother, Gilbert." D.G. was the nearest that those who still possessed religion dared put for the ordinary salutation, *Dieu te garde*.

Curious; Raynaud's dream of last night came true, after a fashion! Only unhappily the treasure of which the dream spoke was diminished to this miserable sum of seven thousand livres, of which only the moiety would come to him. That at any rate was worth having. To-morrow he would write to Gilbert authorising him to complete the sale. With that he issued into the street.

III.

THERE was very little variety in Raynaud's walks. They took place at the same time, that is at the completion of his afternoon's lessons with his pupils, and therefore at this winter season just about the hour of dusk. They never extended outside a short radius from his lodging, and generally comprised some sort of a circle round Mount St. Geneviève. Up the Rue des Postes, the Rue Neuve St. Geneviève, down the Rue Mouffetard, the Rue Bordet, till he reached the Place du Panthéon; this was his route to-day. He extracted a certain dull pleasure from the sight of these familiar streets growing dusky in the gathering night. They made an image for him of the fading of all things, all worldly ambitions and troubles into the same dull twilight of the tomb; an image or half-image, for his thoughts themselves had grown dim and as it were muffled in his brain.

But to-night he was roused up a

little, cheered by the letter which he had got from Gilbert. "Maistre Sommarel, Sommarel," he said to himself, as he reviewed the letter in his mind. "Likely enough that is my old comrade Sommarel. He was a Tourrainais like myself; I know that. Everything seems to bring back those days to me this evening." The scene of their last Christmas Eve came once more distinctly before his mind. "And, *par Dieu!*" he thought to himself, "if this is not also Christmas Eve!" The Christian religion had been abolished, and the months and the days of the month had been changed; so that it took Raynaud a minute to remember that this, the fourth of Nivose, was in "slave-style" the twenty-fourth of December. But, as he walked, the words of the old incantation came back to him, and under his breath he kept on humming, to the self-same chant that they had used, the meaningless invocation,—*"Ja, Pa, Asmodai, Aleph, Beleph, Adonai, Gormo, Mormo, Sadaï!"* It was sad nonsense.

At this moment he was passing along the little street of St. Etienne des Grés, near the church of that name. He vaguely remembered that some years before some antiquarian studies which he had been making on pre-Roman Paris and its neighbourhood had given him a special interest in the site of this little church of St. Etienne; and that he had always meant to go into it, but had never done so. Since then he had forgotten his wish. He had no doubt passed the insignificant building a hundred times in his walks, but had never thought of entering. Religion had now been abolished, and the churches were all closed. Raynaud presumed so at least, but he thought he might at any rate try this one. He found to his surprise that the handle would turn,—after an effort, rustily. The door swung complainingly open and he went in.

The place had not been used for a year. It was colder than the tomb.

Spiders and dust in partnership had hung ropes from pillar to pillar; rats had been busy with the woodwork; a bat or two had found its way through a broken pane in the windows and built nests in the organ-loft and the rood-screen. Raynaud walked forward towards the apse in whose windows the light was beginning to fade. What a pity that he had not happened to have looked up his old notes, so as to know why he had once specially wished to stand inside this church of St. Étienne des Grés. But how curious that he should have so utterly forgotten those antiquarian studies of three years gone, and that they should come back to him now. Quite a flood of things seemed to be coming back to him. Was he in a dream now, or had he been in one through these last three years? Only give him time and he would remember everything.

"I am," it said.

It said—what said? Raynaud could have sworn that no one spoke. And yet there again, "I am and I was;" and it was as if the air laughed silently. "Who are you?" he cried. But there was no answer, and he expected none. For he knew that he had heard no sound.

Then he gave a sudden start, and his heart beat against his ribs, and the sweat gathered on his forehead. For almost as if in answer to his invocation there came a sound from far off, a sound of footsteps drawing nearer and nearer. Raynaud cowered down, suddenly unnerved; and yet there was nothing supernatural in what he heard. The steps came nearer and nearer, and a crowd of men and women (passing by chance that way from a day spent in the Place de la Révolution) burst into the church,—figures not to be seen to-day save in a nightmare: haggard, long-toothed women with black hair or grey, tangled and lank, streaming down beside their cheeks; bleary-eyed men, drunk, not with wine, but with a new intoxica-

tion to which men had not yet given a name, the intoxication of blood. They had come that way by chance, and seeing the church-door open had run in. But as they advanced up the aisle their step changed into a dance. They caught hold of one another and danced up the aisle, up to the chancel, up to the altar itself, throwing up their feet, their arms, clasping one another, whirling and whirling round. They shook the rood-screen, shook down ropes of cobwebs from the high roof, shook the organ-loft, till the organ itself emitted a dull sound, half-groan, half-wail. Then they danced out, and silence, as ghost-like as before, fell on the deserted church. But the dance which had seized upon them there went with them out into the street. It was caught up by others and grew, and grew into a wild infection, a Dance of Death. It was called the Carmagnole.

Raynaud was left once more alone. And again the Air spake: "Swaying and whirling," it said, "whirling and swaying;" and then again, "I did it;" and once again the Silence laughed.

Raynaud could bear it no longer, and he cried out in a tone which surprised even himself,—*"Speak! Who are you? I command you to speak!"* But there was no answer.

Then it was as if a wind blew through the church, and, yes, Raynaud heard the rustling of boughs above, and it seemed as if the moon were struggling to shine through branches far overhead. It was but a momentary vision; again he was alone in the church, and grey evening was changing into night.

"Ye Spirits of the Earth," said Raynaud half mechanically, as the old conjuration came into his head; "I call and conjure you! Be ye my aiders and confederates, and fulfil whatsoever I demand!"

"I am and I was," said the voiceless Voice, and laughed again. But Raynaud no longer wondered what it meant, for the voice was within him.

IV.

IN the morning, long before dawn, Raynaud left his lodging. The porter was nodding by the door, and one man was asleep in the wine-shop with his head upon the table and a candle guttering in its iron saucer close beside him, sending forth much smoke and an evil smell. Raynaud undid the fastenings of the door softly and stole out. A bitter wind met him; some moist snow was lying thinly between the cobble-stones, and a few flakes were still falling. He passed with quick footsteps down the echoing Rue des Postes into the Rue St. Jacques, down and down, to places he had not trodden for years, over the Petit Pont into the Cité, and thence to the north side of the river. It was years since he had been there, and many things were new to him. The Quai de la Grève had been reconstructed since the conflagration; the last building on the Petit Pont had fallen. But Raynaud paid little heed to these things, nor yet to the river which he had not seen for so long, nor to the numberless barges laden chiefly with wood which lay upon the stream, nor the piles of wood all along its southern bank. From the Quai de la Grève he passed along the Quai de la Mégisserie, then along the Quai du Louvre, the Quai des Tuileries, until finally the Quai du Conférence brought him to the goal of his steps, the Place de la Révolution.

The Place was never free from boiterers night or day. Bitter as was the morning many were there now, sitting upon the steps which led up to the terrace of the Tuileries. In the faint moonlight they looked more like black shadows than men. For a moon far gone in the wane gleamed faintly over the trees to the north of the Place. And now, from where Raynaud paused for a moment to look about him, an object which he had never seen before stood between him and the moon, a square open scaffolding mounted upon a sort of rostrum. It

was the guillotine! All round the rostrum hung a little group of men. There were some guards between them and the erection itself, but not many, and they did not exercise their authority with much vigour to keep men from perching themselves upon the lower posts and under the bars of the construction. Raynaud without further pause pushed straight for this crowd, and tried to elbow his way as near as might be to the guillotine. His dress was undistinguished from that of any other member of the crowd. He wore a rough black coat of a sort of shag or frieze, black breeches of the same material. His waistcoat was red, with a blue and white stripe across it; his feet were shod with *sabots*, and he wore a red cotton nightcap on his head. That was the safest dress for any man to wear in those times. When however Raynaud set to work to elbow his way too pertinaciously to a good place near the guillotine, the crowd began to murmur, and as their eyes lighted upon his delicate white hands they began to bandy jests upon him in which an ear accustomed to the times would have recognised danger.

"It is well to be a good patriot, citizen," said a little man standing beside a large fat woman; "but let others be good patriots too." "*Cré nom, oui,*" growled another. "Some come to *la mère* for one thing, some for another," said the fat woman enigmatically. "The citizen has not come expecting to meet a friend, *par exemple?*" said a fourth speaker, setting himself directly in Raynaud's way. "Not a *ci-devant*, for instance?" "Not come to pay respects to the head of his family?" "*Ou bien à la chef de la chef de sa famille,*" said a dullard, thinking that he had seen the pun for the first time and laughing heavily at his own wit. "*Bon jour, monsieur! monsieur!! monsieur!!!*" cried many voices in which shrill ones predominated, after Raynaud, who despite of all, and apparently not knowing what was said to him, had pushed and squeezed his way some yards nearer

the machine. He was just at the corner of the scaffold. He contrived to settle himself on one of its underbeams in a sort of squatting attitude which rested him a little, and there he remained quiet and awaited the day. Some of the citizens who had joined in the gibes upon him continued for a while to growl threateningly. Then something else attracted their attention and they left him in peace.

It was bitterly cold, though nobody seemed very sensible of it. Now and then flakes of snow still drifted lazily through the air. The moonlight faded in the sky, and the grey sad face of dawn began to look forth through the curtains of the east. At last she blushed a little; and between two black bars, like the bars of a prison-window, the sun himself shot a beam or two across the world.

By this time the Place de la Révolution was densely packed. Almost immediately after the sunrise there arose from all the mass a great sigh of satisfaction which shaped itself into the words "*On vient—on vient—they are coming!*" Then a regiment of soldiers marched up and formed round the scaffold. The crowd swayed backwards, crushing and swearing. Raynaud seemed to be unaware of what was going on till a soldier rather roughly pulled him from his seat and threw him forwards into the crowd. The people, who had jeered at him before, laughed and began to jeer at him again. But now a cruel sound was heard in the distance, the roar of an angry multitude. The excitement round the guillotine grew keener every moment; people pushed and swore and tried to raise themselves above their neighbours. One tall man who held a six-year-old child upon his shoulders was very conspicuous.

At the first sound of the distant roar Raynaud had raised his head; an eager light shone in his eyes as if he was listening to catch some definite words, and presently his own mouth opened and gave forth in a monotonous chant the old invocation: "Ja,

Pa, Adonai, Aleph, Beleph, Asmodai. . ."

"What is he saying? He is mad," said the citizens immediately round him, eyeing him askance. "He is giving a signal; it is a plot," said another. His life at that moment hung upon a thread; but he wist not of it.

The roar had been deepening all this time. Every throat in the Place de la Révolution began to take up the cries, which had been running like flame down the streets and quays. "*A bas les tyrans!*" was the usual cry, alternating here and there with "*Vive la guillotine!*" "*Vive la République!*" Some people gave a lyrical turn to the noise by chanting a stanza of the Marseillaise—"*Aux armes, citoyens!* . . ."

The first tumbril reached the scaffold, which the executioner mounted the moment after, greeted by vehement cries of "*Vive Samson!*" and the process of reading out the names began, which to any one but those quite close to the performers seemed like an inexplicable dumb show. With his eyes almost bursting from his head with wild excitement Raynaud pushed and squeezed and sweated to get nearer still to the fatal engine. For now the first bound figure was brought forward and laid face downwards upon the block. Suddenly the noise in the crowd died down, and men held their breaths to watch the final act of this man's life-comedy. There was always a special interest felt in the first execution of each day. Men made bets upon it; whether the head would leap off straight into the sack, or whether it would just touch the woodwork first, and so forth. What is stranger still, the superstitious drew auguries from this event; as if the world (which in the Place de la Révolution it had done) had rolled two thousand years backwards in its course.

Raynaud was one of the very few in the crowd who beheld an execution for the first time. His heart stood still, but not with fear, to wait for the

sound of the descending steel. And then — then it came. Men spoke often in those days of the executed man sneezing in the sack of sawdust. It was not merely a fanciful metaphor. The truth is that the sound which Raynaud's ears now heard for the first time had some grim resemblance to a sneeze. It was made partly by the swift hiss of the descending steel, checked for a moment as it shore through the victim's neck, partly by the head falling into the sack of sawdust, partly by the gush of the blood rushing forth when the head was severed. Such was the sound which followed the moment's pause of the listening crowd, and which Raynaud heard for the first time. And as he heard it the blood coursed again through his veins, his eye glistened with a preternatural brightness, and he seemed to drink in new life.

The day wore on; Raynaud had eaten nothing since the previous night, but he seemed to feel no hunger. One after another the tumbrils discharged their burdens and the bloody sacrifice went on. Sacrifice! yes, that was the word which flashed into his mind. A sacrifice to whom or what? An answer to that too seemed to lie somewhere in the back of his thoughts, but he could not seize it then. The crowd around him, which had been formerly so suspicious, could not help being struck by his look of exultation, and repented itself of its suspicions. And one man, who had not been noticed before, with a dark face and a peculiarly acute cast of countenance, was so pleased that he placed his hand on Raynaud's shoulder with the usual compliment, "I see you are a good patriot, citizen!"

At length the last cart had been emptied and a blankness fell over Raynaud's soul. It was again dark. Quickly the crowd began to disperse, not without wild cries and fraternal embraces and dancing of the new *carnagnole*. The acute-faced man came up and spoke to Raynaud, who listened as if he understood, but understood nothing. The other gave

him a piece of his bread and a fragment of sausage. Then they nodded and exchanged "good-night," and Raynaud walked away.

V.

RAYNAUD passed again along the quays and over the Petit Pont towards his home. Suddenly he found himself once more in the little church of St. Étienne des Grés. The day had been long gone, and it was colder than ever. But the night was clear, and the starlight stole in, muffled and shadowy, through the east window of the church.

Through the east window,—but why did the groining of the window seem to shake and sway from side to side? Why did the air blow so cold through the church? There was an answer to this, Raynaud knew, but could not lay hold of it. From the organ-loft (if it was an organ-loft) came a sad sound like that which the wind makes through pine trees. Raynaud looked and looked into the recesses — of what? — the church? Nay; but they stretched far beyond the limits of the church. It was as if he were in the midst of a vast forest. Dim star-lit stems seemed to catch his eye from far distances girt round by shadow; and now over his head boughs were certainly waving to and fro.

Then a wild sort of half-chant filled his ears, wild but very faint. He could dimly fancy he caught the voices of his old comrades, Gavaudun, Sommarel, Tourret, in it; at any rate the chant brought them in some way into his mind. And the sound grew nearer and nearer, wilder and harsher. Figures came in sight, fierce in gesture, with unkempt locks streaming down their faces, clad in skins, brandishing spears on high, marching or dancing forward in a strange dance. Then there was a crashing among the branches and heavy wheeled carts rumbled into sight, each drawn by two bullocks. Beside them walked men in white apparel, with fillets round their

hair. The carts were full of men and women, who all had their hands bound behind them, in some cases bound so tightly that the withies had cut through the flesh and a streak of blood trickled downwards over their hands. Some opened their mouths from time to time, but whether to sigh or cry out Raynaud could not tell, for the shouting and screaming of the crowd would have drowned their voices. And now, as each cart came to the stopping-place, the bound men were one by one brought down, a white-robed priest plunged a knife into each one's heart, and the blood flowed out upon the ground. The cries and chanting grew louder and louder; people danced in ecstasy round the pool of blood, which was swelling almost into a rivulet, and flowed away among the trees. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it all ceased; and Raynaud saw the dark church round him with a faint light struggling in through the window. And within him the silent Voice spoke,—“I am the spirit of the place. I did it. Two thousand years ago, and yesterday and—” Thereupon the whole air seemed to be filled with pale faces of slaughtered victims, who moved round as in a procession. Raynaud saw at last the faces of his three old comrades of the Rue Pot-de-Fer following one after the other, and at the end of all a fourth face,—his own!

VI.

HE returned to his lodging. Citoyenne Fourmisson met him on his way to his room, and poured upon him a torrent of abuse and threats. But he only stared at her and passed on. What had that past life to do with him now? The world had begun to live anew, and all the new life was coursing through his veins. Fourmisson was away; he had been sent with Tallien to sharpen the sword of the Revolutionary Committee at Bordeaux and stamp out the last embers of Girondinism.

The next morning, and the next, and the next, Raynaud was in his old place beside the scaffolding of the guillotine. Each day he encountered his friend of the first occasion; sometimes these two walked part of the way home together. The acute-faced one was full of statistics: of how many could be executed by one “machinist” in a single day; of what work had been done by a rival machine in the Champ de Mars; of work that was being done in the provinces. One evening, after a modest dinner together, he took Raynaud into another church he had never been in before. It too was in the neighbourhood of Mont de Geneviève. It was a huge church this, not like that of St. Etienne de Grés disused and empty, but crammed with—worshippers shall we say?—yes, worshippers of a sort. The same wild feeling of exultation that he had felt first in St. Etienne and again by the guillotine, seized the student now, as he came among these cloisters and looked along the sea of red caps and dark unwashed faces which the place contained. Many were smoking; a hot thick atmosphere rose from the standing throng, and behind it danced a sea of faces which crowded the amphitheatre of benches in the nave and reached almost to the roof of the church. Raynaud had seen long since a print from some picture by an Italian master in which tiers and tiers of angels, all bearing instruments of music in their hands, rose one above the other as to the roof of heaven. These were not the faces of angels; nor was it like sweet music the sound which came from their throats when the speaker in a high tribune paused in his oration. This place was the debating-hall of the Société des Amis de la Liberté; and the church was the church of the Convent of the Jacobins.

As his friend spoke to this man and that, helping him forward, Raynaud felt the last traces of his old dullness and indifference fall off him like a cast garment. The whole assembly

was but an instrument to be played upon—and a vision of the rat-riddled organ of St. Étienne flashed through his mind; he would make it sound what tune he chose. He was not therefore the least surprised to find himself presently in the tribune. The motion before the society was not of much importance, merely one for the expulsion of one Legrand who, his enemies pointed out, had been once the signatory of an *arrêt* in favour of the "traitor" Lafayette. Such an act of expulsion would have been of course only the first stage on the road to the guillotine; but in the case of a single individual, of what consequence was that? What Raynaud said upon the motion was, like most of the other speeches, pretty wide of the subject in hand. But his peroration stirred the audience to frenzy. "Our duty," he cried, and it was as if a sonorous voice not his own had been lodged within him, "our duty, the duty of France, is to purify the whole world; and that can only be done by blood, and more blood, by blood ever and always!" And when he ended, the human organ round him swelled into such a diapason of rough-throated applause as had never been heard in that church before.

Raynaud became a celebrity. He was placed upon the Revolutionary Committee, and the work of that body went forward ever more rapidly under the inspiration of his zeal. He seemed to require no rest nor food, and whenever he was not occupied upon the tribunal he was sure to be seen in a cart by the guillotine, or on the scaffold itself, superintending the execution of its victims. In those days he carried a motion that the sittings of his tribunal should not begin till the afternoon, but should be prolonged, if needful, into the night; for the work of Samson and his colleagues was generally over before four. Great was the increase in the rapidity of work at the tribunals, and the growth of the *fournées*,—the batches of men who wended daily to the Place. It

was through the motion of Raynaud that eventually a third guillotine was set up at the edge of the Faubourg St. Marcel, on his side of the river, nearer still to that site of the old grove of sacrifice where now stood St. Étienne des Grés.

But there were days of pause. On the *decadis*, for example, the present substitutes for Sunday, no work was done; no prisoners were executed on that day. And on such days Raynaud would sit quietly at home over his books, the gentlest citizen in Paris. He would allow no suitors to him on that day, for his readings were deep. He had found his old volume of John of Menz, and read much in him in those days. On one of these *decadis* (it happened to be a Sunday also, if such things had been taken account of), he was sitting thus occupied in his old room when a messenger did gain admittance, bringing a note. Raynaud gave a start of pleasure as he read it. It was signed "Sommarel," and it asked him to go and see the writer, who, it seemed, was in the prison of La Force. A pleasant air of ancient days seemed to breathe round Raynaud as he read the old handwriting and saw the familiar name. He put down his book and followed the messenger at once.

Sommarel came to meet him, white and trembling, very dirty too, though his clothes were better than those which the citizens of Paris thought it wise to wear. He had an ugly cut upon his cheek, which showed purple against his dead white skin.

"I never knew anything about it when I bought the property," he began at once, almost before Raynaud had had time to greet him, and his voice trembled miserably. "God is my witness, monsieur, that I never knew! I was preparing to write to monsieur, to the illustrious citizen, and tell him—Ah, *mon Dieu*, citizen, my old friend, save me, save me! I have a wife and—" and here his trembling voice broke into sobs.

"*Dieu de Dieu*, what does he mean?"

said Raynaud, in his gentle voice. "What is it, my old comrade? You are beside yourself."

"What? The money, the treasure that I found,—was I not arrested because of that?" Sommarel checked himself in his explanation. His voice trembled less.

"Money? Treasure? I know nothing of it," Raynaud said dreamily, passing his hand before his face. "Treasure? Ah, at Les Colombiers? I heard something of that,—long ago," he added, as if plunged in a deep reverie.

Sommarel stared. He had only completed the purchase of Les Colombiers two months previously, and it was only a week since he had discovered under an old apple-tree an iron box containing three thousand pieces of twenty livres,—sixty thousand livres in gold, besides jewels. He had thought of making some communication to Raynaud, who was too powerful a person to be left unpropitiated; but had taken no steps towards doing so till three days before he had been arrested and carried up to Paris. If he had only waited and not been so unnerved by fear! He tried now to put a good face upon it. "Ah, then my arrest had been no doubt a pure mistake. How fortunate that you, my old friend, should have the power of releasing me so easily! You will order me to be set at liberty at once, *n'est-ce pas?*"

Raynaud's face darkened. It was as if some subject totally foreign to his present thoughts had been forced upon him. "I have not the power," he said briefly; and while that dark look was on his face Sommarel dared not press the point.

Presently his face cleared, and he and his old comrade exchanged information about their lives since the day when they parted close upon six years ago.

Sommarel had prospered moderately (he was careful to say only moderately) as a lawyer in Tours, had taken to himself a wife, and had two children. He looked piteously up at Raynaud

as he told him these last details. But the other only went on to ask about Tourret and Gavaudun. Tourret, it seemed, had not gone to Switzerland. His father-in-law, the *ci-devant*, was dead. Tourret and his wife had still a moderate income, and lived quietly in Auvergne. During all the talk Sommarel watched (as a dog watches) the face of his friend. He had, Sommarel saw, the same mild dreamy eyes which the young student had in days of yore, the same gentle voice. At last Raynaud got up to go.

"Ah! *mon Dieu*, Geoffroi, thou wilt not leave me here. Consider the danger! Have pity, have pity; think of my wife, my children!" Again his voice was choked with fear and grief.

Once more the dark look came into Raynaud's face. "I have not the power," he said, and hurried out.

Sommarel was in one of the early batches that came up for trial. But as a matter of fact his arrest had been a mistake, and there really appeared to be nothing against him. The Tribunal however hesitated to acquit; acquitting was an act which seemed almost contrary to nature. Besides this lawyer of Tours wore a better coat and finer linen than seemed compatible with the best citizenship,—always excepting the case of Robespierre, who was allowed by public opinion to wear silk stockings and gilt buckles. Still you could not precisely condemn a man for wearing good clothes. "What do you think?" one member whispered to Raynaud. "Must one acquit?" Raynaud made no answer; he only stepped from his seat on the rostrum to the body of the hall.

"I denounce the citizen," he said. "I have known him long, and I know him a proper subject for the guillotine."

"Geoffroi, my friend, have pity on me!" was all that Sommarel could say.

"Ah," said the other members, "he acknowledges the old acquaintanceship. Citizen Raynaud has acted the part of a good patriot!" And Sommarel was removed.

VII.

EVERYBODY spoke of this act of patriotism on the part of Raynaud. It had its imitators; and before long it came to be a distinguishing note of Roman virtue to denounce some relative or friend. In such a case denunciation meant death as a matter of course. It was argued that only under the pressure of the most ardent patriotism had private feelings been so far sacrificed. To question therefore the knowledge of one who had been wrought to such a step was clearly absurd.

To Raynaud it only meant that the batches grew larger day by day. There was a question of dividing the Revolutionary Tribunal that the work of trial might be more expeditious, and Raynaud warmly advocated the scheme. Robespierre advocated it too. There were found some who said the gentle-eyed author of the saying, *Il faut du sang, et encore du sang, et toujours du sang*, was a better patriot than Robespierre himself; so Robespierre coldly advocated the scheme for division of the Tribunals and it was carried.

On the other hand the friends of Robespierre remarked that though it was Raynaud who had set the fashion of "denuncings," and though it was he who had finally introduced the practice of accepting these denuncings in the place of evidence, no more of his own friends or relations ever appeared before the Tribunals. The discontent which these hints began to arouse went so far that at last one of the denounced ones was acquitted by Raynaud's own Tribunal against his earnest pleadings. Of late, moreover, Samson had once been hissed and not cheered when he mounted the guillotine in the Place de la Révolution, and the tumbrils were no longer cursed so loudly as they rolled through the streets. No crowds preceded them dancing the *carmagnole* and singing; on the contrary, the crowd sometimes stood silent, some women were even heard to use words of pity. Raynaud

himself witnessed this scene; he went home and took to his bed. Robespierre was said to have declared that he was going too far and demoralising the guillotine.

Should he denounce his brother Gilbert and so vindicate his position once more? There was Tourret too living in Auvergne. Yes, he decided on both these; anything must be done rather than that the daily sacrifice should grow less. Meantime a piece of good fortune happened. Gavaudun, teaching French literature and law in Prague, had heard that Raynaud had risen to a position of importance without hearing of the details. He wrote to his former comrade asking for some help in a matter of private interest. Raynaud replied and succeeded at length in enticing Gavaudun to an interview with a supposed notary and notary's clerk upon the Swiss frontier. Gavaudun was seized and carried to Paris, denounced and executed. Raynaud's influence rose again: the batch of *condamnés* next day increased from thirty-nine to sixty-three; and once more the blood seemed to course through his veins.

But alas! next day came the news that Gilbert Raynaud had escaped. Only his father-in-law, old Plaidoyer, was seized. And people began to murmur against Raynaud again. But then Tourret had been taken; so came the news the day following; and he in due course was brought up to Paris.

It was said that seldom had a prisoner pleaded more eloquently than Tourret did. His speech was delivered as though addressed personally to Raynaud and to him alone, though in fact the latter was not holding the position of a judge but of a witness. Tourret spoke of their old comradeship, of pleasures and hardships shared in common, of this act of kindness on the part of Raynaud, of that return by himself. Then he went on to plead the innocence of his life since, buried as he had been down in the country,—“simple-minded and avoiding State affairs,” as he said,

quoting in Greek ; for he and Raynaud had read Aristophanes together in the old days. A momentary smile flitted across Raynaud's unexpressive face as he heard these words ; for he knew that if there had been any disposition to acquit upon the part of the judges, this display of learning would probably just turn the scale. Tourret went on to speak of his father-in-law lately dead, of his wife and one child, and his voice faltered a little—not over much. He spoke like a born orator ; even the judges were moved ; and Citizen Fourmisson whispered, looking at Raynaud's impassive countenance, "That man has a heart of stone." But then Citizen Fourmisson had always been of the party secretly opposed to the Aristides of the Tribunal. Aristides himself was as one who only listened for form's sake. When the speech was over he raised his head with that peculiar light in his eyes which seemed almost to mesmerise his fellow-judges and to call forth the word he expected. *Condamné !* came from all mouths at once, and the prisoner was removed to make way for the next.

VIII.

Of the next day's batch to the guillotine in the Faubourg St. Marcel Tourret was the first name on the list. Raynaud was, as usual, upon the platform. Robespierre too had come that day to assist at the executions, jealous of the other's growing reputation for patriotism of an exalted kind. There were one or two other citizens of some note there. But these two stood before the rest, the observed of all observers ; Robespierre at any rate was, for he was not often seen in that remote south-east region. He had on an elegant drab coat, black breeches, and white stockings. Raynaud was in his usual coarse black coat and breeches and red cap of liberty ; and out of these rough habiliments the singular delicacy of his fea-

tures, the singular long white hands, showed only the more conspicuous.

He watched the cart as it drew up to the scaffold, watched the victims while they answered to their names, watched the first of them, Tourret, as he was brought upon the platform bound,—yet not as if he had ever seen him before, though his comrade cast upon him a glance which might have awed a Judas,—watched him as he was led forward and placed with his head upon the block.

There was, it has been said, always a momentary pause and hush before the fall of the first head. The details of the performance this day were the same as on the previous one. The swift-checked hiss, a dull,—a very dull thud.

Then a woman screamed as never woman had screamed before. The sound sent a thrill of horror through even that crowd, used as it was to horrors of many kinds. Those who were a little way off set the woman down as the wife of the condemned. But those who were close to her saw that she had not even been looking at the victim, that her eyes had been fixed upon Robespierre and his com—

But there was nobody standing beside Robespierre !

The woman was foaming at the mouth. "*Mon Dieu, c'était le diable !*" she moaned. Samson had hold of the head ; he turned to display it first to the two great men. Robespierre on his part turned round to speak to his neighbour, and then his face grew white to the lips. There was no Raynaud beside him ! Others had seen the same sight that the woman had seen. "It was Robespierre's familiar spirit," they said ; and in the talk which grew out of what they had to tell lay the germ of Thermidor.

But one acute-faced man close to the scaffolding was heard to murmur, "The mystic chain is broken—*Catena mystica rupta est !*"

C. F. KEARY.